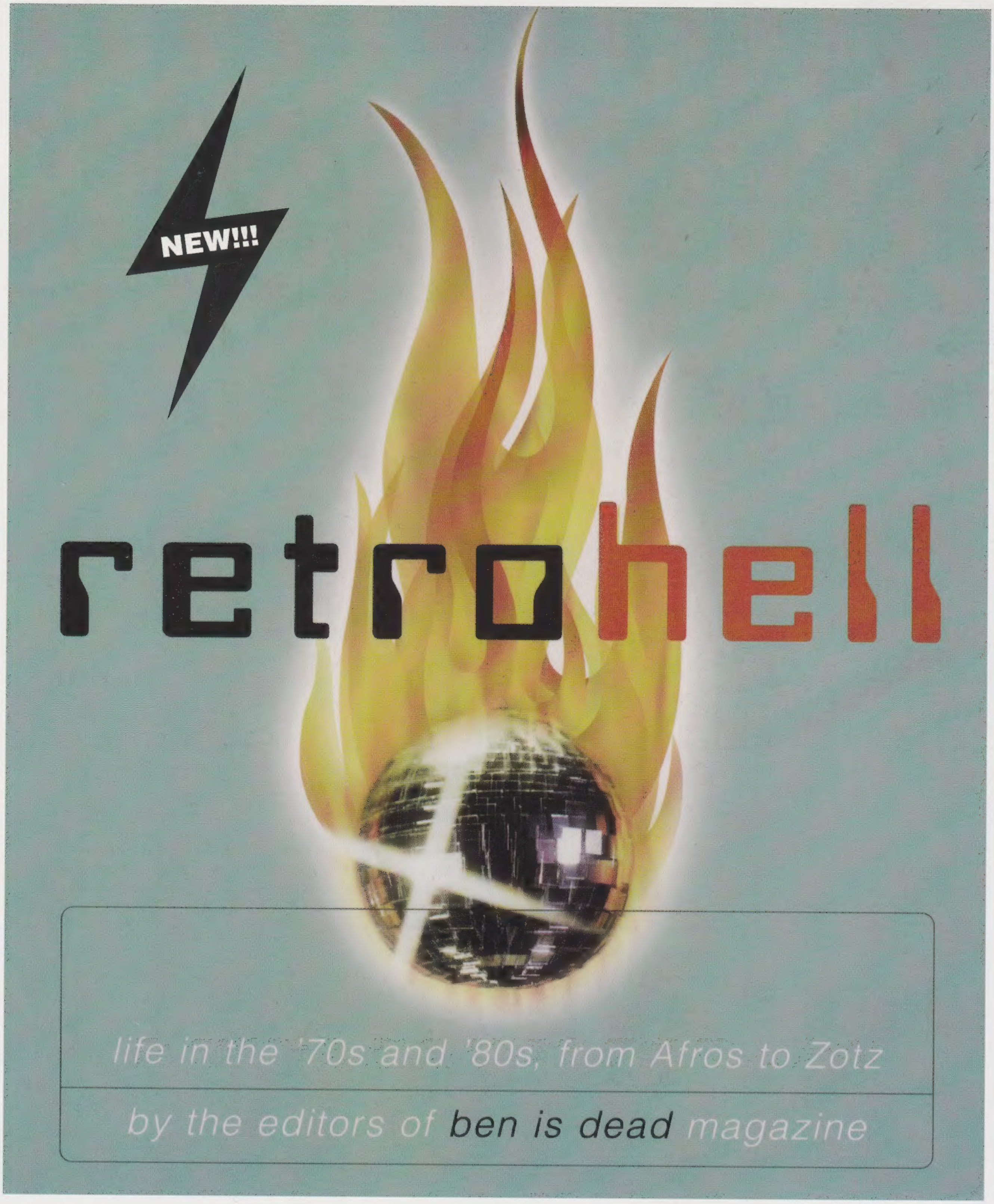
USA $3.95 / Canada $5.50 Issue Number 29

Ben is Dead

the comics issue!


NEW!!!
retrohell
life in the '70s and '80s, from Afros to Zotz
by the editors of ben is dead magazine

New Book by **Ben Is Dead Magazine**
in a worthy store near you!

or direct $15 – signed, sealed, and sent priority mail ($12.95 for each additional copy).
Send check or m.o. to Ben Is Dead, PO Box 3166, Hollywood, CA 90028.

the fine print: this collection includes the efforts of some 70 contributors. it's published by little, brown which means you can find it in most bookstores, but for some reason it's in the u.s. history section. do YOU go to the u.s. history section to find a pop-culture book? do you EVER go to the U.S. history section? so, check out that u.s. history section for once in your life… or get it direct so we might have a chance to make a hard-earned buck. this is the reason this comic issue was delayed – let us know if it was worth it. if you've still got one foot in the past, this retro americana encyclopedia is for you; we'd almost guarantee it. if u're a regular reader, this version includes 8 months of re-editing, re-writing and new material not found in the retro issues of ben is dead magazine. plus it's an actual, real book that looks most swell on the coffee table. 100 retro hell photos, 250+ pages, we even did our own index! can u dig it?!

"I admit to being a perfectionist. I feel most comfortable when my environment is perfectly maintained."

BJ Ork
Spokesbull
Matador Records

At Matador Records, cleanliness isn't everything, it's the only thing.

Your Needs. Your Record Label.

Matador Records understands that your comfort depends in large part on the cleanliness of your purchases. That's why each member of our staff washes their hands 18 times a day. And all of our compact discs and 12" records are factory sealed, for your protection. We even make sure that our lavatory is always clean, in case you ever stop by our offices. Perhaps it's this attention to detail that won Matador the prestigious ZZ MOWER award for "Most Sterile Mid-Sized Record Company". If hating dirt is a crime, you can send us to prison.

HELIUM
No Guitars
12" EP $7 CD EP $7

YO LA TENGO
I Can Hear The Heart Beating As One
DBL LP $10 CD $12

BARBARA MANNING
1212
LP $9 CD $12

GUIDED BY VOICES
Mag Earwhig!
LP $8 CD $12

FUCK
Pardon My French
LP $8 CD $12

Matador Records
The Bathroom is Always Clean

Matador Records 625 Broadway NYC 10012 All Prices Include Postage www.matador.recs.com

Big Selection

SEE HEAR

FANZINES

MAGAZINES

BOOKS

33 ST. MARKS PLACE
N.Y.C.
Between 2nd + 3rd Avenues
212-505-9781

ITS GREAT!

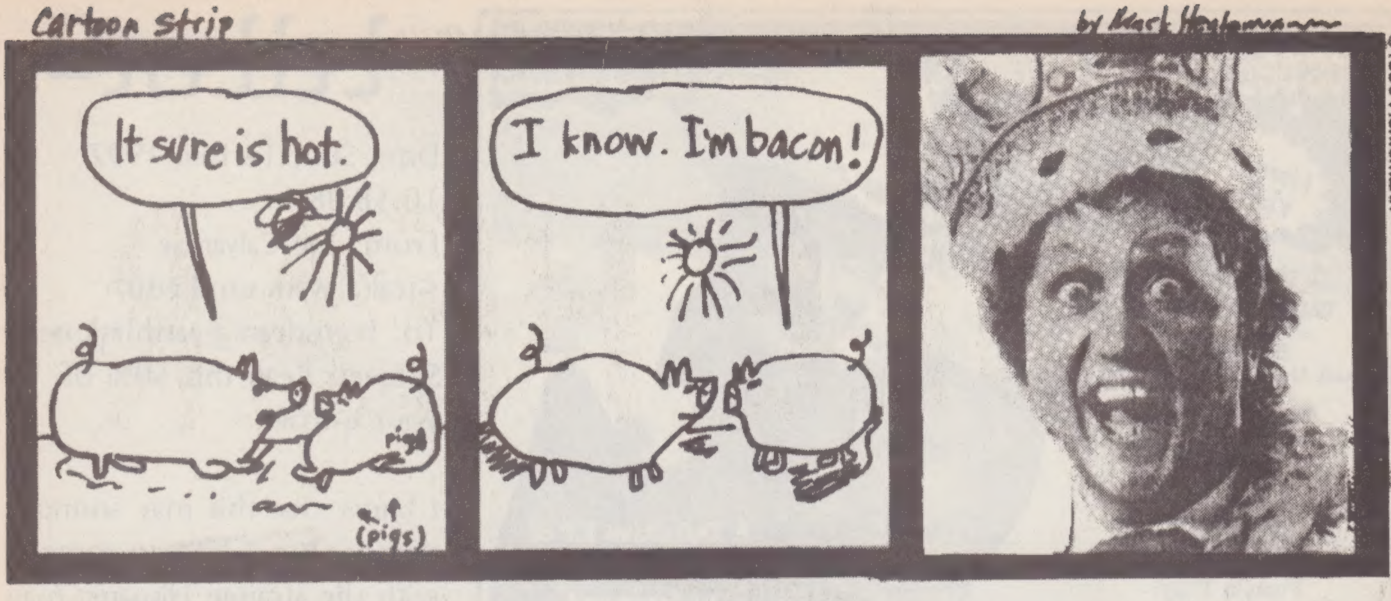
STOP IN TODAY!

MAIL ORDER CUSTOMERS: Send $3.00
($4.00 outside U.S.A.) for Catalog!
STORES: We Wholesale!
SEE HEAR MailOrder + Wholesale
59 E. 7th St. NYC 10003
212-982-6968

http://www.zinemart.com

Cartoon Strip

by Mark Hertemann



©1993 Hertemann

CREDITS

editor/publisher: darby
girl friday: lorraine mahru
lisa aa, karen eng, patty powers, howard hallis, brian doherty, stymie baldwin, evan mack, ryan bigge bigger biggest, estefany fidel, noël tolentino, leyna marika p., selina romao, eric reynolds, paul sharar, fiona smyth, mick bladder, chris lee, jim blanchard, dan raeburn, chris morrill, ariel schrag, erick gilbert, stephanie meurer, jack often, steve moramarco, rev. tin-ear, jim woodring
+ more contributors and thank you's page 151

art direction/design: darby

COVER ART: Jhonen Vasquez & Rikki Tavicat

Advertising: 213/960-7674 (24hrs)
Contact: P.O. Box 3166, Hollywood, CA 90028. FAX: 310/479-2336
e-mail: benisdead@earthlink.net
WEB: www.benisdead.com

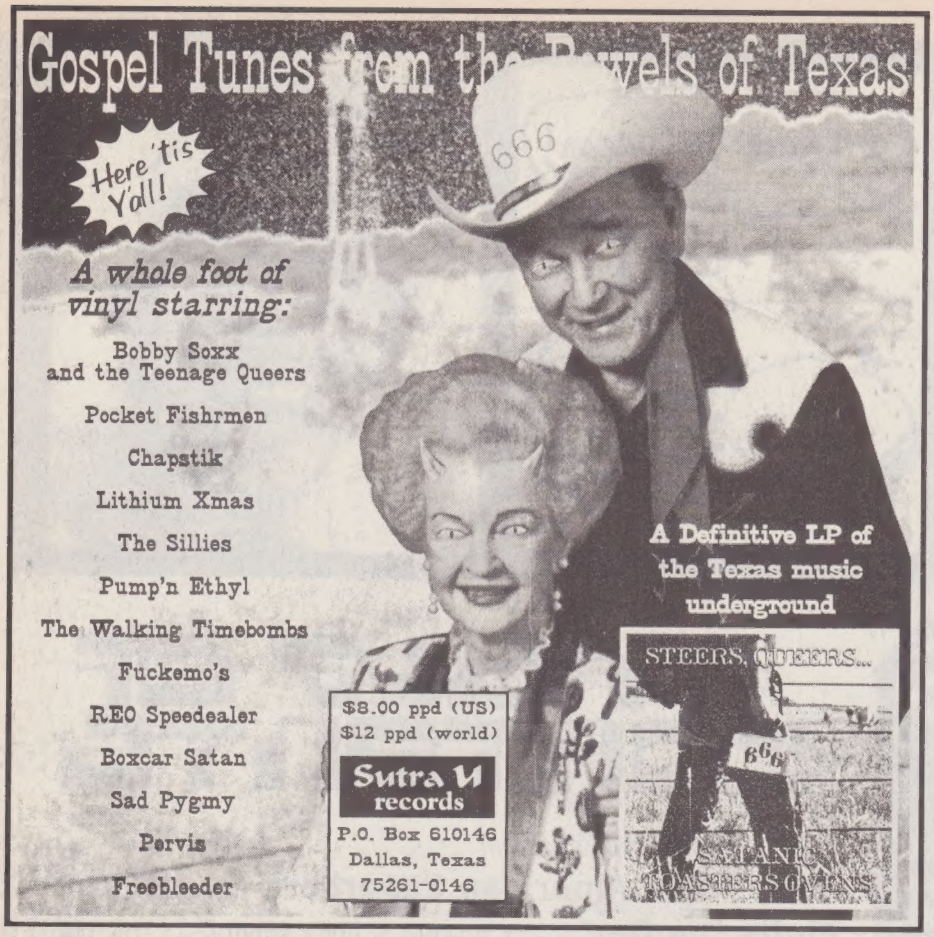
subscriptions: sample copy $5; $15 for 3 issue sub (bulk mail), $20 for 1st class. Canada $25. Europe $35. Beyond $40. Make all checks out to Ben Is Dead. Send 32¢ stamp for full catalog. Subscribers MUST send in change of address! Check the box on your mailing label – if it contains a number, that is the number of the last issue u're scheduled to receive. BID reserves right to edit all. Everything sent becomes our property & is not returned unless you beg (or remind us).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Hero Worship (chris lee) . . . . pg 9
Mr. T: Real American Superhero (chris m.) . pg 12
Fluffy the Dog (patty powers & fiona smyth) . . . . pg 15
Definition: Super! (darby) . . . . pg 21
Cuckoo for Cuckoo (darby) . . . . pg 27
Monster (paul sharar) . . . . pg 34
Yummy Chicklets (dan raeburn) . . . . pg 38
Girlz + Comix Japanese (leyna marika p.) . . . pg 42
Sex Sex Sex Sex Sex (karen eng) . . . . pg 45
Tart (darby) . . . . pg 49
The Santa Claus of Comics:
Ron of Last Gasp (karen eng) . . . . pg 55
Zoo it Yourself Comics (lorraine) . . . . pg 62
Show Me the Xeric Grant (ryan bigge) . . . . . pg 62
Adrien Tomine & His Optic Nerve (karen eng) . pg 83
Christine Shields & the Blue Hole (noël tolentino) . pg 91
Johnny the Homicidal Maniac (selina) . . . . pg 95
Death to Neil Gaiman (howard hallis) . . . . pg 95
Another Chat with Pete Bagge (brian doherty) . . pg 107
Less than Expert Music Opinions . . . . . pg 119
Judging the Book by its Cover . . . . pg 138
Mighty Morphin' Money Machine (howard) pg 149
Sleepytime (darby & jim blanchard) . . . . pg 154

. . . And more intellectually compromised offerings!!!

Comics are words and pictures. You can do anything with words and pictures. –Harvey Pekar



Gospel Tunes from the Bowels of Texas

Here 'tis Y'all!

A whole foot of vinyl starring:

Bobby Soxx and the Teenage Queers
Pocket Fishrmen
Chapstik
Lithium Xmas
The Sillies
Pump'n Ethyl
The Walking Timebombs
Fuckemo's
REO Speedealer
Boxcar Satan
Sad Pygmy
Pervis
Freebleeder

A Definitive LP of the Texas music underground

$8.00 ppd (US)
$12 ppd (world)

Sutra U records
P.O. Box 610146
Dallas, Texas
75261-0146

THE QUAKER GOES DEAF

Our entire selection available via WEB
www.quakerdeaf.com

1937 w. north av
chicago 60622
(773) 252 9334

Chicago's most DANGEROUS record store will blow the SMOKE outa yer Ears

letters

Date: Sun, 14 Dec 1997 10:58:48
From: Joe Calvarese <jcal@wam.umd.edu>
To: benisdead@earthlink.net
Subject: Read this 50% of your e-mail

I know that this may sound strange, but I have to agree with the strange Hispanic man at your health spa who offered you the shampoo. I was looking for the Suave Shampoo Home Page to thank them for making a product as wonderful as Strawberry Essence Shampoo when I came across your site. I went to Yahoo and typed "Strawberry+essence" and yours was the first site to come up. The man who offered you the cleaning products was correct on the shampoo my friend. I know that you think I am strange, but I urge you to sample the Strawberry Essence. To fully appreciate it, you probably need to grow your hair out some. Sorry if I scared you, but I'm only trying to help.

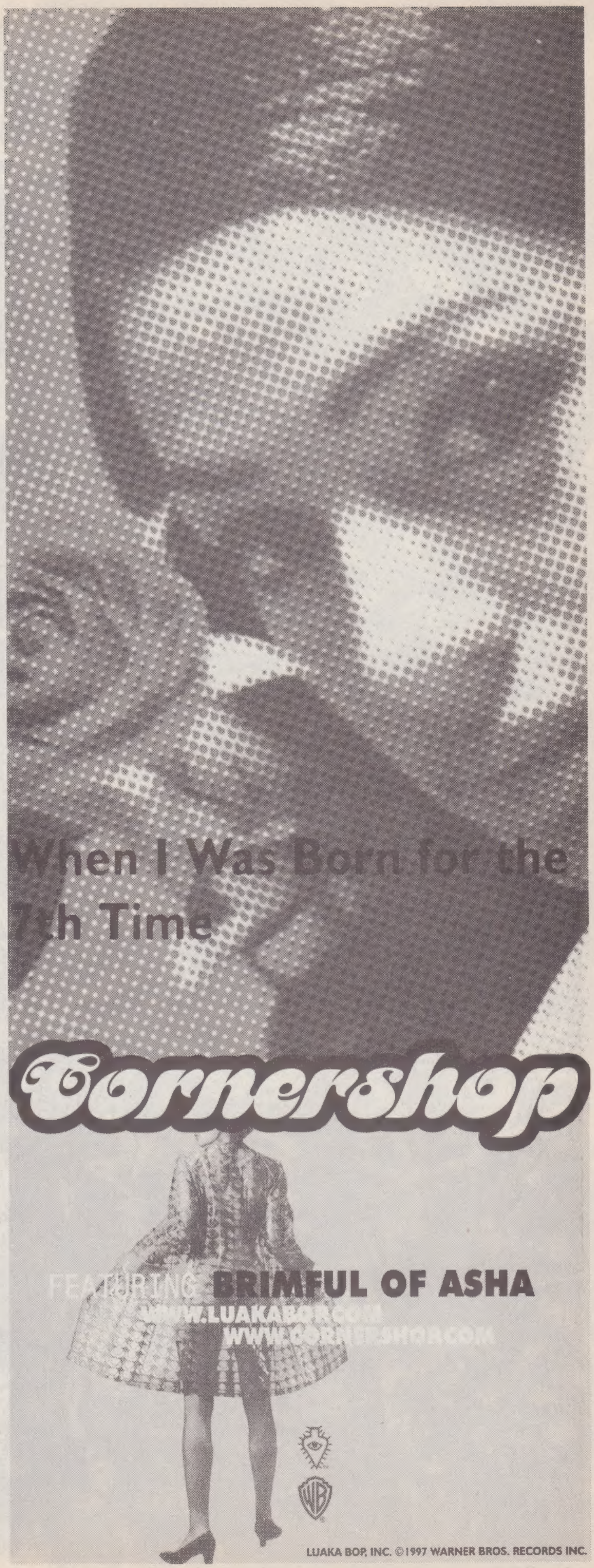
bigian@wam.umd.edu
(don't worry, I'll never write to you again)

* * *

yeah! keep those cards & letters coming!

Geeks are basically retarded, right?

And everyone knows that comic fans are geeks. So, keeping in line with our thematical dramas we present to you our most retarded effort ever. Two years, too many retro issues, and a book later: THE COMIC ISSUE. But wait, even if you hate comics, don't go just yet. Because I almost never read a comic book before starting this. Actually, I think I did hate them – for excluding me somehow; for being boy mentality. Of course I read the funnies each Sunday, and the silly sex comics in dad's *Playboy*, but except for occassional forays into *Heavy Metal* and Bilal's futuristic industrial nightmares, that was the extent of it. But today I look forward to review packages from comic book companies like Slave Labor, Fantagraphics, and Drawn & Quarterly… more than zines, books, and definitely CDs. I have also discovered the true art of toilet reading, of which comics better suit the more speedy female bathroom experience. Another reason for my reserve was I like imagining visuals for myself, instead of having stories all drawn out for me. Now I see these divergent optical portraits can sometimes be more stimulating than the words alone. And suddenly, unconsciously I find myself utilizing the style: recreating otherwise awkward life incidents into more humorous frames of scenes with talk bubbles. And finally, comics have helped me realize a deep fondness for illustrated representations of real life characters who otherwise would bore, annoy, or make me sick: practically everyone looks good (or at least more interesting) as a comic book character. It is kinda like looking at the world through rose-tinted X-Ray glasses. Give it a try. Get through this thing and at the very least we guarantee you, too, will be an even bigger geek than ever before. *luv 'n newsprint kisses, darby*



LUAKA BOP, INC. ©1997 WARNER BROS. RECORDS INC.

This comic book is part of my plan… I have you right where I want you… So kitchee-koo, you bastards! –R. Crumb, *Zap*

HERO WORSHIP

BY CHRIS LEE

The first time I masturbated to orgasm was an accident. It was a Saturday morning, the *Justice League of America* was on television, and my erection – along with the surprising, shocking amount of ejaculate that followed – had Aquaman's name written all over it. But my real masturbatory love (before discovering Jim Palmer's Jockey ads) became the actual comic books – my first pornography.

Blond god Aquaman, in his green tights and orange scoop-neck top, was a surf stud, fer sure. But I didn't have my own VCR at that time; I had no way to pause, to slow-mo, to fully concentrate on my hero. Ever try to masturbate with assorted villains and showboating superfriends like Wonder Woman getting in the way? It's impossible! The printed matter, however, could be studied and collected. A hobby was born.

I still have my comic book collection, most of which remains in mint condition despite being so used and boy-handled, each issue wrapped in plastic like a penis sheathed in latex. Surprisingly enough, the print Aquaman never appealed to me like his broadcast counterpart. He became too steroidal, too dark, and too skanky. While this works for some characters, like the Punisher for example, Aquaman was one of those heroes that should have stayed sleek and squeaky-clean – like water! He even grew out his hair, and really, who needs another Thor (Fabio of the comic world)?

Speaking of squeaky-clean, what comic book hero can compare to young Spiderman in that department? Peter Parker has always been trying to shake the wimp rep, but his alter-ego is, when it comes down to it, delicious. Just look at the way Spidey is drawn: the "average" mesomorphic body, sinewy, compact, decent height but not too tall. The musculature's not overly exaggerated, the legs look like they're sculpted from marble, his abdominal six pack presses through the costume – overall he's one tight little package; heightened masculinity that somehow doesn't seem completely unattainable. The costume, the Spidey suit, makes him dangerous, transcending Peter Parker's personal hang-ups and normalcy. Why do I have the feeling that if Spiderman picked me up in a bar, it would be like sex with a policeman or UPS delivery driver – "No, leave the uniform on just a little bit longer, pleeeeease?!" Out of the suit, Peter Parker is just another Chris O'Donnell type – pretty enough, I guess, but *yawn*.

I always found the depiction of body hair on superheroes to be totally arousing, and for that fetishistic reason alone, Captain America's pretty damn hot. Cap is more grown up than Spidey, like a hornier older cousin or uncle. He's very obviously a red-blooded American male, with a suit fashioned from old glory herself. But beneath that patriotic garb bulges lots and lots of... chest hair! What else could be causing those odd little bumps found across his wide, manly chest and shoulders? Still, it is kind of sexy, perhaps suggesting that behind Captain America's goody-two-shoes act is a kinky, raunch top comin' to get ya! It's the kind of chest hair you see in soap operas, hair that women run their manicured hands through while laying atop their lover post-coitus, having a little pillow talk or a tender moment. One thing puzzles me about Cap though: if his chest hair is so industrial strength, where's the leg hair to match, to pop through the tights? I'm beginning to wonder if Mr. America shaves his legs. Surely not very masculine of him if he does. Maybe he's a cyclist.

Just like in real life, body hair can be totally repulsive at times. Just look at Wolverine. One of the X-Men, Wolverine's obligatory mutant gear, namely his claws, seem less a freak-show characteristic than his thickly hairy shoulders. Again, is this to illustrate his animalistic side? Is the artist a bear? Why is Wolverine that hairy? Just what are they trying to say? Maybe it's all there to imply what I'm guessing: that he's the best one of them all in bed.

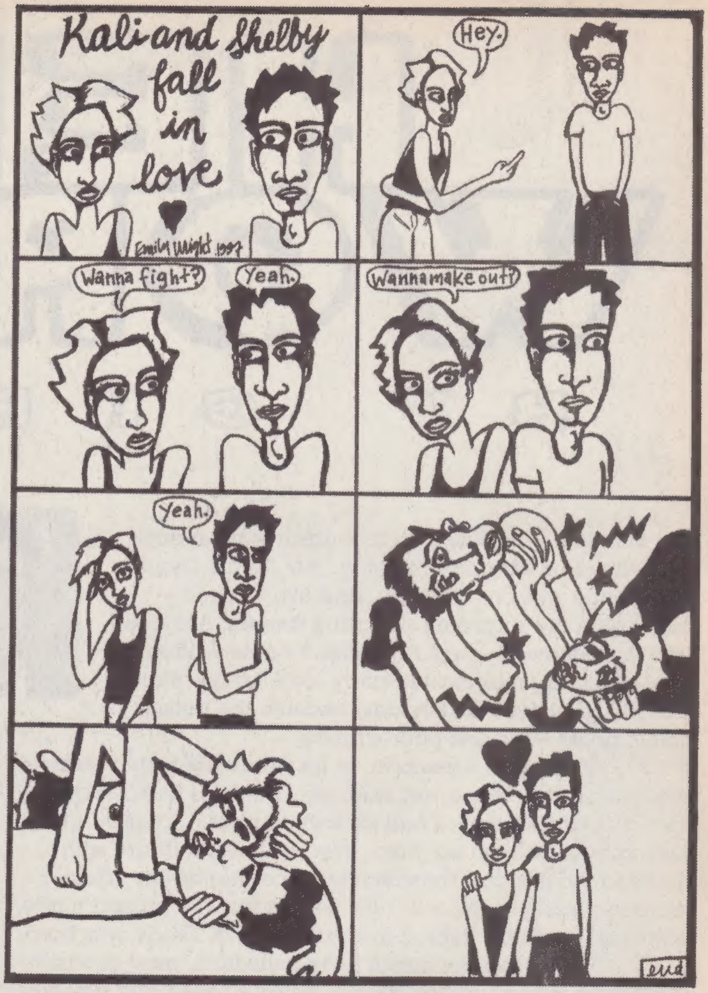
Let's not forget that a good head of hair on a superhero is important too. Balding characters tend to be the lesser attractive villains. Superman's slick, blue-black coif is practically a cultural icon, (There's even a band named Superman Curl). The Green Lantern possessed a dashing head of curly brown hair to die for – just imagine grabbing onto that during sex! Spiderman's confining, whole-head mask didn't really do much for his profile, what with the web designs converging in a circle between his eyes, but the look is reminiscent of those black leather, zip-up bondage masks. But underneath, Peter Parker and the Green Lantern could have been hair-twins.

It's surprising that, after years of reading comic books, more little boys don't grow up with as many of the societal complexes that women do from the representation of body types in the media. While all of the aforementioned heroes qualify as fantastic, idealized representations of the perfect male body, just the term "comic book" seems to place them above reproach. The word "superhero" alone suggests an over-the-top exaggeration not to be taken seriously. That said, I'm still waiting for people to feel the same way about the occupation "supermodel." If people tell me that kids and adults aren't getting off on illustrated hotties, they just don't understand the sexual allure of well-drawn biceps, chests, abs, butts, and baskets. People jerk off to pictures of Elle MacPherson and Markus Schenkenberg every day – and they don't even wear costumes or masks or have interesting powers.

Hey fanboy, grow up! Are you gonna waste your life lookin' at that superhero crap? –cover of *Hup* #1

New Album

©1997 Reprise Records www.RepriseRec.com



BAD MEAT #3

Gnarly, old-style underground comicbook by **Jim Blanchard**, with support from **Jim Goad**, **Pat Moriarity**, **Rev. Ivan Stang**, **C. Kegel**, & **Denny Eichhorn**. 32 pages.

XXX ADULTS ONLY
$4.00 postpaid

BAD MEAT t-shirt

Sleazy lime green, pink, and black logo on a white 100% cotton shirt.

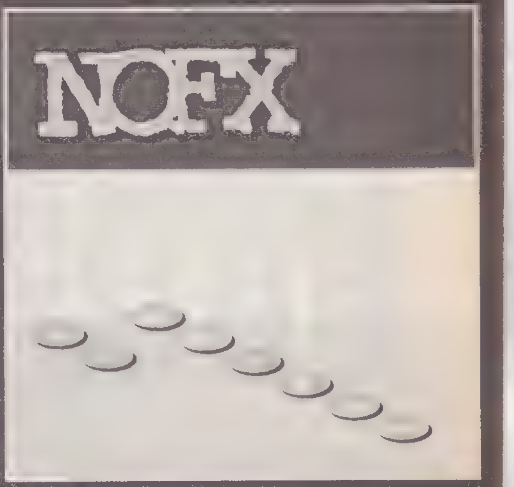
L & XL only. $10.00 postpaid

BEEF EYE BOOKS BOX 20321 SEATTLE, WA 98102 USA
write for free catalog and sticker

Putting the Arms in Armageddon

Millencolin
For Monkeys

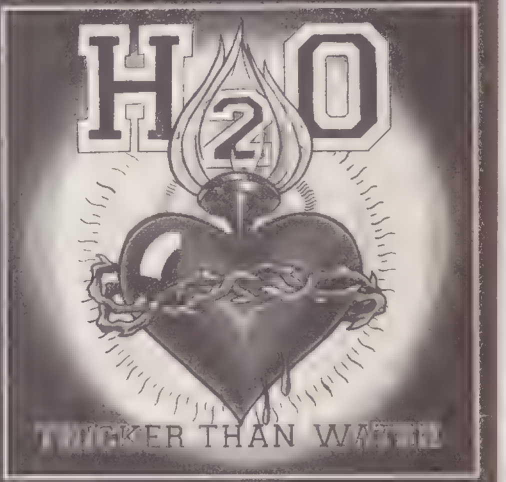
The Cramps
Big Beat from Badsville



NOFX
So Long and thanks
for all the shoes

Voodoo Glow Skulls
Baile De Los Locos

Pennywise
Full Circle



H2O
Thicker than Water

The Bouncing Souls

Pulley
60 Cycle Hum

Ten Foot Pole
Unleashed

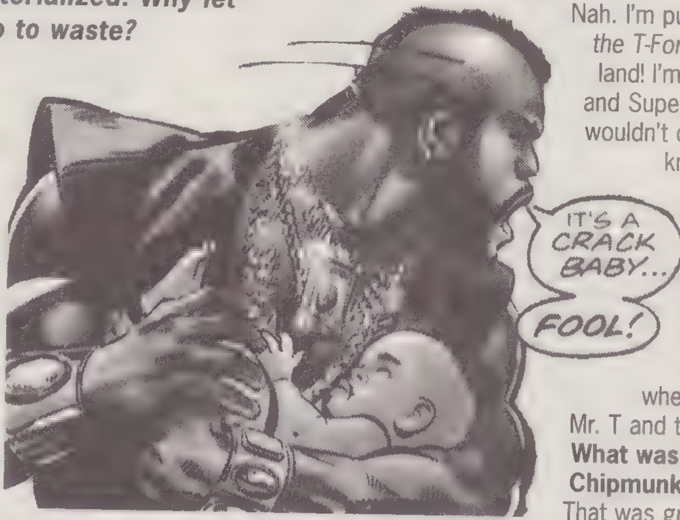
Epitaph

HUGE AND EXCLUSIVE MR. T

BY CHRIS S. MORRILL

IT'S OVER, PUNKS!
I'M GONNA RUN YOU AND YOUR DRUGS OUTTA THIS 'HOOD!
'CAUSE MR. T IS IN THE HOUSE!

This interview with Mr. T was conducted on June 25, 1992 at the signing of his then new comic book Mr. T and the T-Force at Geoffrey's Comics in Torrance, CA. It was originally intended for the Shlümpf fanzine #4, which never materialized. Why let such a great piece of art go to waste?


IT'S A CRACK BABY... FOOL!

Can I get an interview?
Alright! Dig it! Dig it! We'll talk! You ask the questions and we'll rap! Dig it brother. Thanks for coming out to see me because I know there are a lotta things you could've done today. Ya'll could've went out chasing girls at the beach or you could've went and got a cool one. But, wow, you decided to hang out with the T-man! That's cool! I appreciate that brother.

Mr. T then high-fives a young child and offers to read his comic book to him if he needs help reading. "If you can't read, big brother'll read it to you." I offer him a promo tape from a band called Shlümpf.

Hey! What's this mess here?!? You tell them I don't take this kind of mess here! I'll beat their butt! Tell them to put some clothes on then give something to Mr. T! You got that on tape there? Ya'll don't never bring me stuff like that! I'll beat their butt!!! That's right! Okay, we're jammin'!

Have you ever been in a mosh pit before?
What's a mosh pit?

That's where people slam dance.
No, I don't go to places like that! I'm a respectable man!

What's your favorite food?
Chicken and rice!

Have you ever held a monkey?
No, I have never held a monkey! I've seen a lot of monkeys!

Cool! You have a movie coming out called *Hideous Mutant Freaks* (later retitled *Freaked*). How did you enjoy playing that role...I guess you play a...
I play a bearded woman. And when they're paying money I enjoy it. It's honest money. Other people might say, "Yeah, Mr. T's a sissy playing that role!" I'm a *rich* sissy! Ha ha!

Do you have any other films coming out in the near future?
Nah. I'm putting all my energy into *Mr. T and the T-Force*. It'll be the hottest book in the land! I'm the only REAL superhero! Batman and Superman – they're not real! Superman wouldn't come to South Central, L.A., you know that? Mr. T would! Batman wouldn't be caught dead there! They'd take his car!

Do you still keep in touch with the A-Team?
Nah!

Why not?
Look here, who need the A-Team when we've got the T-Force? That's Mr. T and the T-Force! Don't forget it!

What was it like working with the Chipmunks?
That was groovy! Alvin was the greatest and Simon was hilarious!

Do you still keep in touch with the kids from the Mr. T cartoon?
You better believe it! Especially my dog Dazier!

What kind of music do you listen to?
I like Bach and Beethovan...and Tah...Cze...Cheskowskie!

What's your favorite group?
Frank Sinatra! A one man army!

Are there plans for a "Mr. T and the T-Force" video game?

YEARG!
TOUGH GUY, HUH?

Take off your shirt, man.

Sometimes the "good" Mr. T wants to slap people and the "bad" Mr. T sez, "Nah, don't slap him!"

We got so many plans for Mr. T and the T-Force, I can't tell you right now! We just want the book to sell, sell, sell! It's positive reading. It's the stuff taking drugs out of the community!!

What does "Yearg" mean? It's a quote from your comic.

What does who?

"Yearg."

I don't got that in my book!!!

You say, "Yearg."

Who says that?!? Where?!? Show it to me. It must be a misprint! Or it must have been the artist taking liberties!

I open the book to a page in which the T is yelling "Yearg!" while being hit by a stick. He continues to sign autographs.

Here it is.

(Enraged) I DIDN'T SAY THAT! Whoa! Well, what do you expect when you hit someone in the back with a rod?!? Yeeearg!!! Don't worry, I didn't say that. The rest of the words I said. The artist said that!

Are there plans for crossover comics with Robocop, Predator…

Nah, nah, nah! Mr. T is gonna be versus the criminals. That's what the T stands for! For the women and children, the T stands for Tender. To the thugs, the T is for Tough. So we're not gonna be fightin' no space aliens. I have no super power! I have no utility belt! I have no x-ray vision! I'm just plain ol' Mr. T with… wi… wi…

What about this drawing of you and a monster?

No! Those are my demons! Those demons are for the next issue! Those my demons! Those demons are for the next issue! Those're demons attacking me!

Uh…okay….

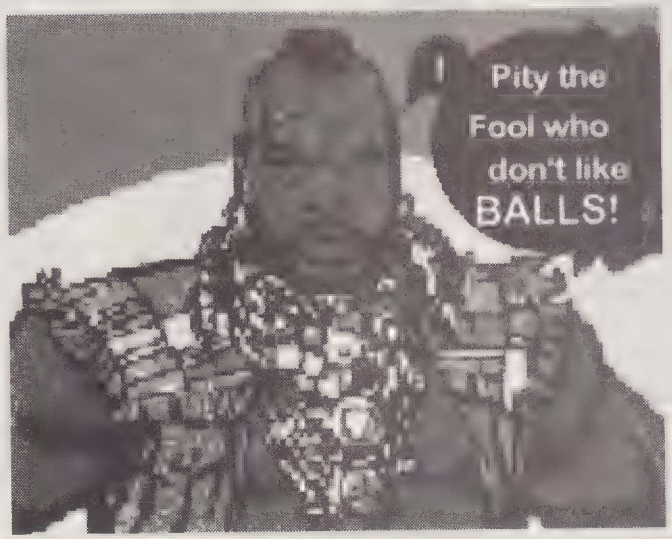
Your dreams! You have dreams your dream nightmares!!!

Oh, I see. Are there plans to release a Mr. T sings album?

Nah, nah, we did the album already in 1984. It was called "Mr. T's Commandment." It was on *Soul Train* and *Solid Gold!* So you're a little late.

Remember *Rocky III* when you…

Of course I remember *Rocky III*!!! That was the greatest movie next to uh, uh… *King of Kings!*"


Pity the Fool who don't like BALLS!

Remember when you said to Adrianne that you'd show her a real man?

Yeah! Yeah! "You want to see a real man? I'll show you a real man!"

Did you show her?

No, she didn't come to my house! That was all the fun to get Rocky to fight me. When you're on the street and ya want to get a guy to fight, you talk about his girlfriend or his mama! If he don't fight then, he ain't got no fightin' in 'im!

Do you still talk to Hulk Hogan?

Yeah! Every once in a while when he calls me up and not collect!

Would you ever do the tag team thing with him again?

Of course! I'll do anything for money! …Not anything! Some things.

Or would you rather wrestle against him?

I'll wrestle anyone if the price is right! Alright!

Do you have any kids?

Huh? No, I don't have any kids, I have two daughters! Kids come from goats! People have children! Human beings!

Do you force them to have the same haircut you do? I was asked to ask you that.

Whoever asked that is very stupid! I let my children wear their hair the way they're supposed to wear it! I get paid millions of dollars to wear my hair this way! That's right!

Have you always had this haircut?

No, I use to have a bald head. I used to have it natural for a while when all the black guys had it natural. White boys said we all look alike so I cut my hair this way so you won't get me mixed up with other black guys! Alright! Dig it!

If they ever had a *Diff'rent Strokes* reunion would you want to be on it?

Only if they paid me! I won't do nuthin' without being paid! It takes money to shine this gold up, ya know what I mean?

Aren't you afraid of the *Diff'rent Stokes* curse?

Mr. T ain't afraid of nuthin'! I'm a Christian! I don't fear the living, the dead or unborn! I don't believe in curses!

Have you ever killed a man?

<uncomfortable pause> I beat the crap out of some guys who robbed my mother.

If somebody took away the thing that means the most to you, what would you do?

My mother means the most to me! My children mean the most to me! There'll be a lot of PAIN and BLOOD.

Are you ever in conflict with the good Mr. T and the bad Mr. T?

Every day! Sometimes the "good" Mr. T wants to slap people and the "bad" Mr. T sez, "Nah, don't slap him!"

Do you have any pets?

I got four dogs. One named Danger, one Pesticide, Suicide, and Genocide.

How about a Mr. T street fighter game?

Nah, nah.

What if they paid you money?

Oh, if they paid me money?!? Yeah, yeah, yeah. I forgot! I forgot! I got excited! I forgot! They would have to pay me money! Money move me! But look…It's been fun…but you got to run! Alright!

Hey, thanks a lot. Any last words?

I pity the fool!

He pities the fool. Don't we all pity the fool? A brave insight from a brave man. Let's all follow his example. Well, that's it! Hopefully I'll be back with more celebrity hob-nobbing. Signing off, Chris S Morrill, "Ear Beyond Boy".

Your shirt fool!! ***NOW!*** –Mr. T in *Mr. T and the T-Force*

BEGGARS BANQUET

NEW

STELLA ASCENSION CD/LP
A FIERCE SONIC ASSAULT
FROM NASHVILLE

STERLING UK
MONSTER LINGO CD
HEFTY CHUNKS OF GUITAR NOISE

LUNAR DRIVE COMBINES AMBIENT
TECHNO WITH HAUNTING NATIVE
AMERICAN INDIAN
CHANTS SOARING
OVER DRUM N' BASS
TINGED BEATS.
CD ONLY.

EMPIRION
ADVANCED
TECHNOLOGY
CD/LP/12"
DRIVING
INDUSTRIAL
TECHNO
DEBUT

MEANWHILE...

RANDOM
AN ALBUM OF
INTERPRETATIONS
FILE UNDER GARY NUMAN

7"s

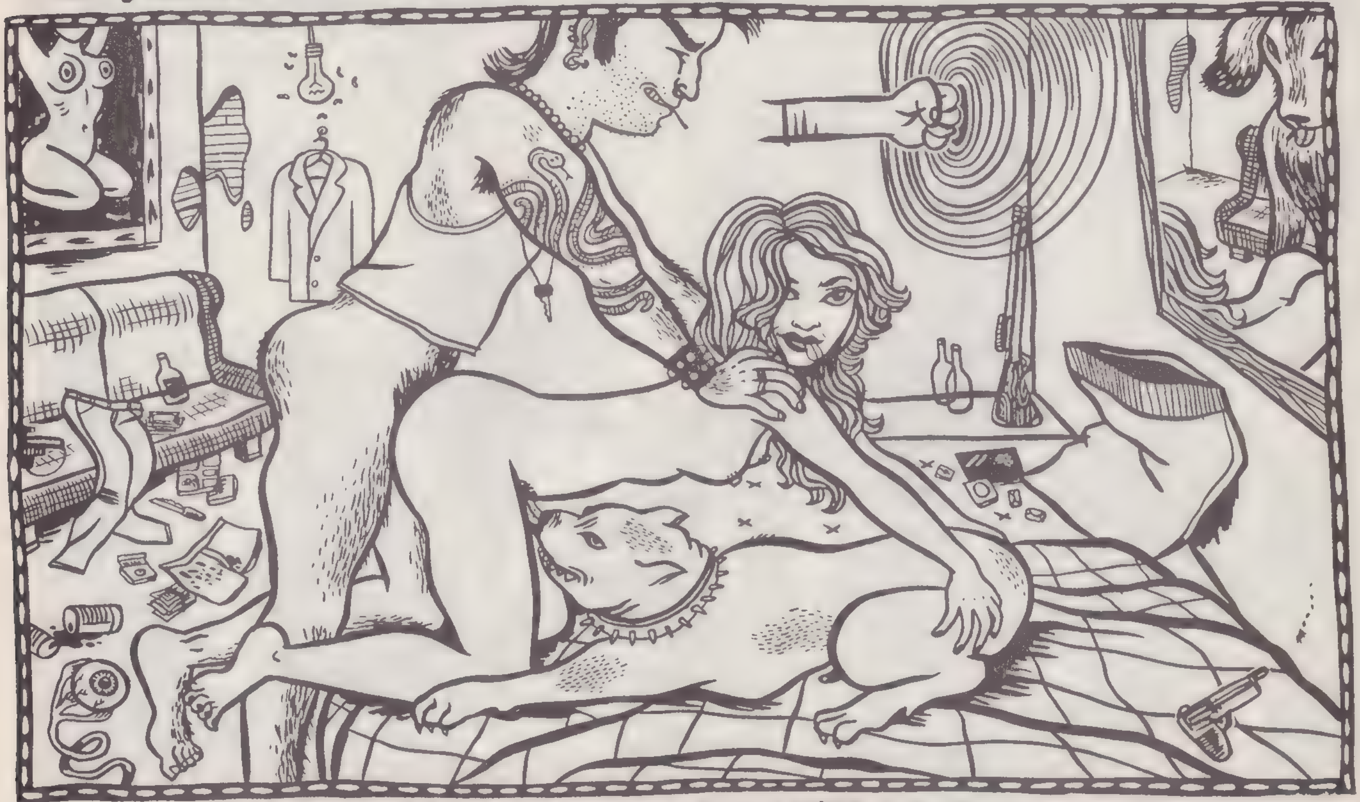
NEW SEVEN INCHES OF
RECORDING PLEASURE BY
BEEKEEPERS, COMET GAIN,
DREAM CITY FILM CLUB

beggars banquet

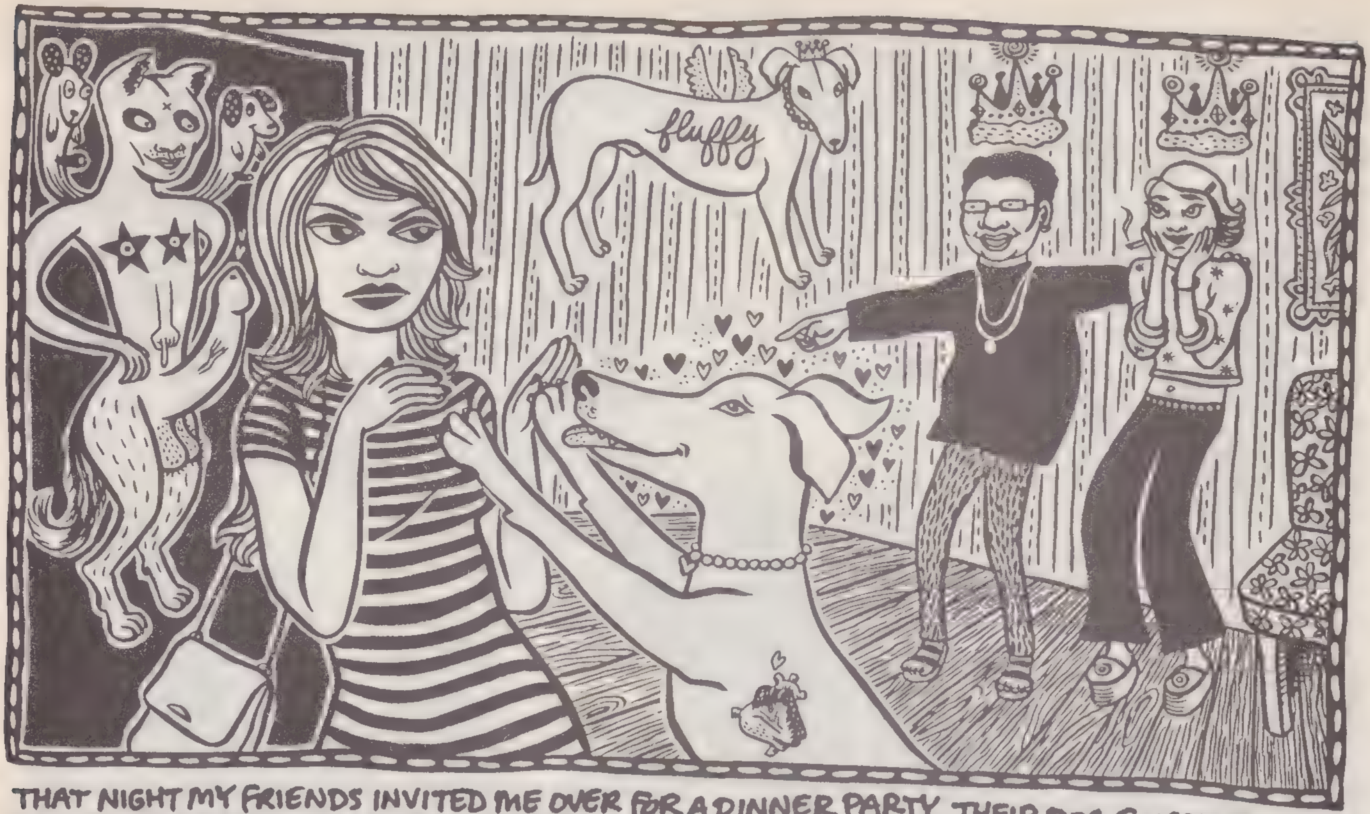
FOR MORE INFORMATION,
WRITE BEGGARS BANQUET
580 BROADWAY.#1004.NYC.10012
BEGGARS@BEGGARS.COM
HTTP://WWW.BEGGARS.COM

FLUFFY THE DOG

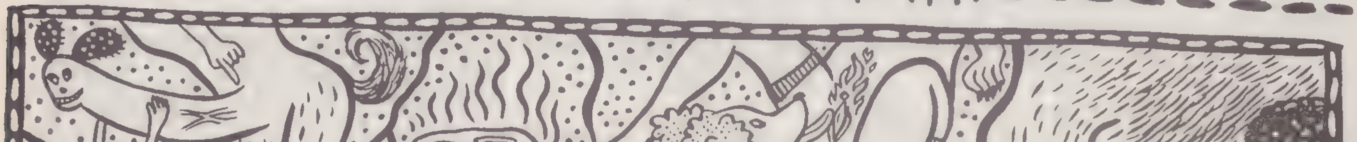
I'D BEEN HAVING LOTS OF NIGHTMARES WHERE I WAS TALKING TO A MAN WHO WAS HALF MAN, HALF DOG - LIKE DAVID BOWIE ON THE COVER OF DIAMOND DOGS. HE'D BEEN STANDING ON HIS HIND LEGS WITH A HUGE ERECTION. IN THE DREAM I WANTED TO FUCK HIM SO BAD BUT I COULD SENSE THE PRESENCE OF EVIL EVERYWHERE. WHEN I DECIDED TO FUCK HIM ANYWAY, I WOKE UP BEFORE I CAME.



I'D TAKEN A JOB STRIPPING IN ORANGE COUNTY DOWN THE BLOCK FROM KNOTT'S BERRY FARM. ONE DAY ONE OF THE MANAGERS, A "MAC-DADDY" TYPE, TOLD ME THAT HE WANTED TO FUCK ME IN THE ASS WHILE HIS DOG LICKED MY PUSSY AND WOULD I BE INTO IT? I MUST'VE BEEN TELLING HIM ABOUT MY DREAM. ANYWAY - IT WAS FOOD FOR THOUGHT.

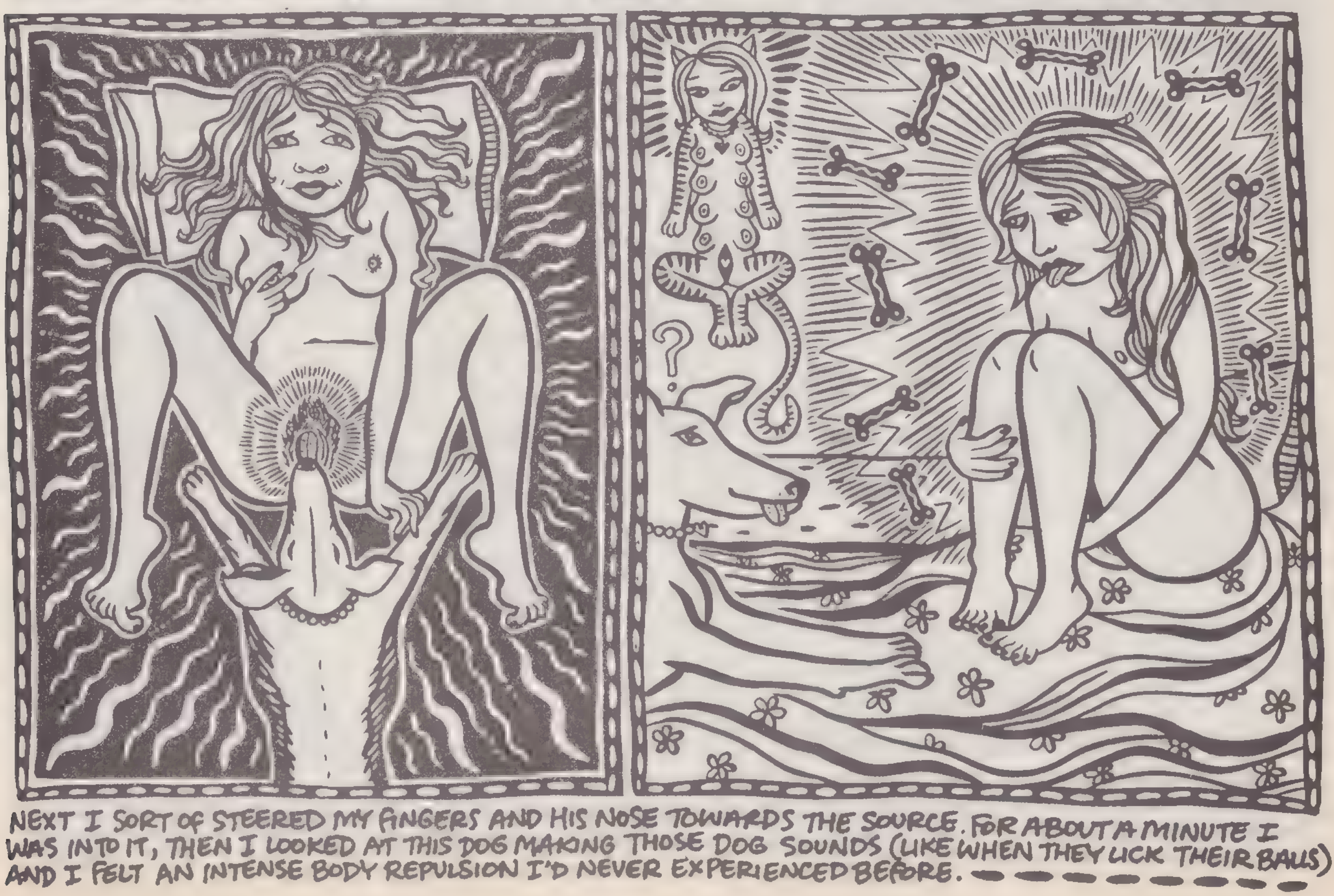


THAT NIGHT MY FRIENDS INVITED ME OVER FOR A DINNER PARTY. THEIR DOG FLUFFY POUNCED ON ME WHEN I WALKED IN THE DOOR. FLUFFY IS ONE OF THOSE DOGS WITH PALE BLUE EYES, FLOPPY EARS AND A GREYHOUND'S BODY. HIS FUR LOOKED LIKE GREY VELVET. BUT HIS OWNERS ARE A COUPLE OF QUEENS - HENCE THE NAME FLUFFY.

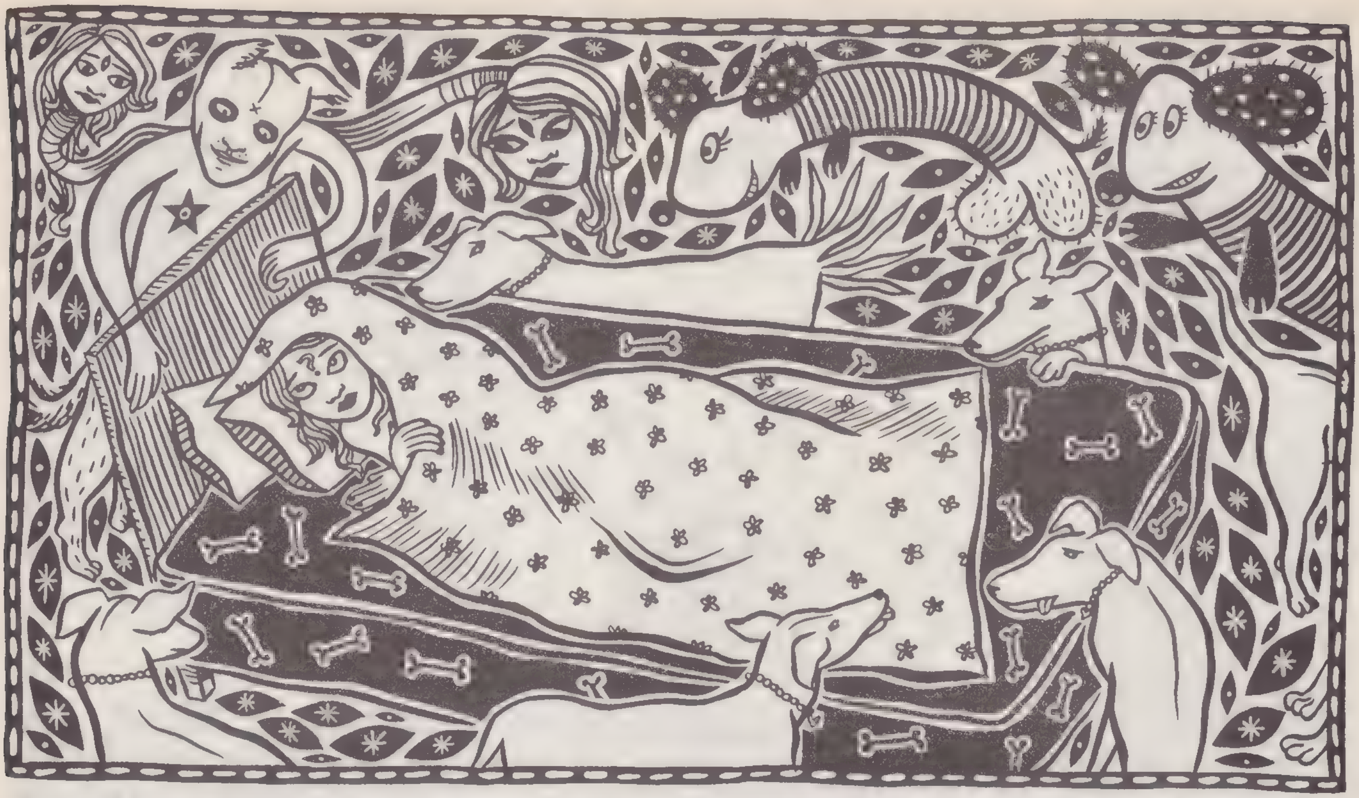


I STARTED TELLING THE STORY ABOUT MY BOSS' WEIRD PROPOSITION, EXPECTING TO GET A LAUGH. INSTEAD DIANE SAID "OH, I USED TO LET BRIAN'S DOG EAT MY PUSSY ALL THE TIME. IN FACT WHEN I MASTURBATE, IF I THINK ABOUT HIS DOG I'LL COME JUST LIKE THAT. (SHE SNAPS HER FINGERS)." EVERYONE STARTED TELLING THEIR OWN BESTIALITY STORIES UNTIL DINNER WAS SERVED.

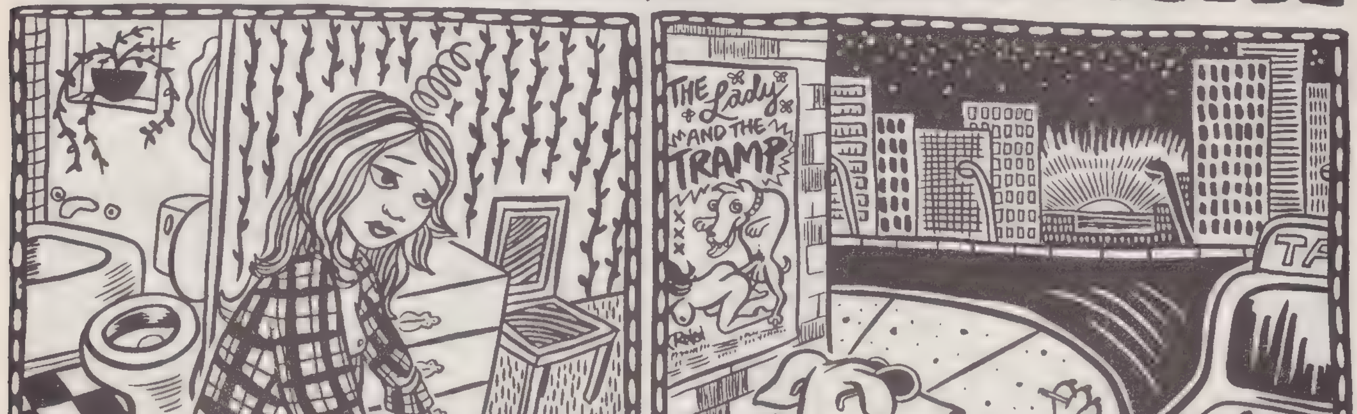
BY FOUR IN THE MORNING EVERYONE HAD EITHER LEFT OR FALLEN ASLEEP. I WAS TOO TIRED TO DRIVE SO I SLEPT IN THE GUEST ROOM. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, I WOKE UP FEELING SO HORNY I ALMOST FELT NAUSEOUS. (YOU KNOW HOW MAYBE ONCE A YEAR YOU WAKE UP LIKE THAT, WHERE IT'S SO INTENSE THAT YOU ALMOST GET PHYSICALLY SICK?) SO I STARTED TO MASTURBATE. I LOOKED DOWN AT THE FOOT OF THE BED AND FLUFFY LOOKED BACK AT ME. I WONDERED HOW YOU GET A DOG TO LICK YOUR PUSSY, SO I STUCK MY FINGERS INSIDE MYSELF AND PUT THEM IN FRONT OF FLUFFY'S NOSE. HE SNIFFED AND GAVE THEM A LICK. I DID IT AGAIN. — — — — — — — — — — — —



NEXT I SORT OF STEERED MY FINGERS AND HIS NOSE TOWARDS THE SOURCE. FOR ABOUT A MINUTE I WAS INTO IT, THEN I LOOKED AT THIS DOG MAKING THOSE DOG SOUNDS (LIKE WHEN THEY LICK THEIR BALLS) AND I FELT AN INTENSE BODY REPULSION I'D NEVER EXPERIENCED BEFORE. — — — — — — — — —

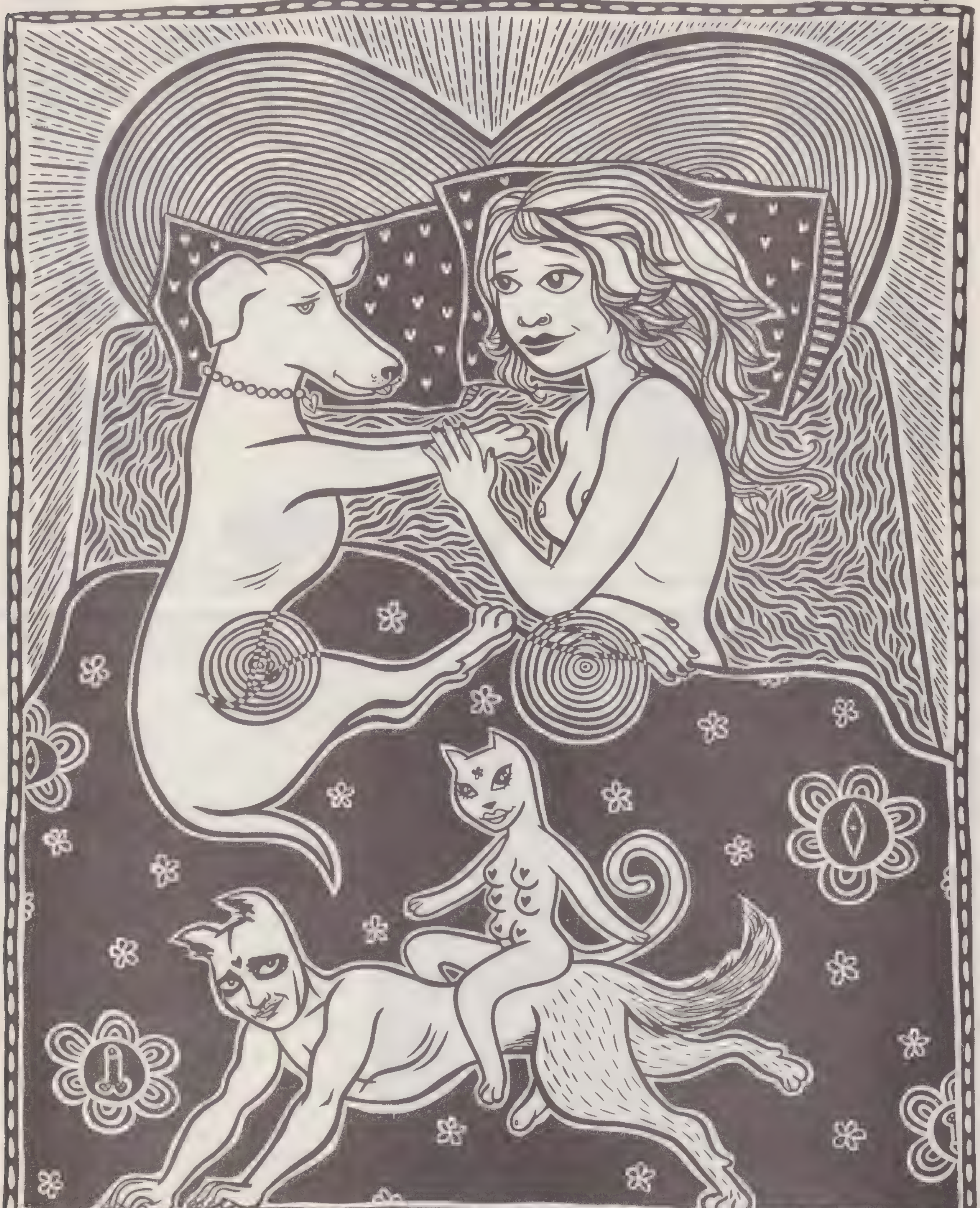


I WENT BACK UNDER THE COVERS, AND WONDERED WHETHER I WAS DRIVEN TO THIS BY CURIOSITY, DESIRE OR IF I WAS JUST DESPERATE. FLUFFY WAS ALL EXCITED NOW, AND PANTING, WALKING AROUND THE BED. I WAS FRIGHTENED THAT HE WAS GOING TO TRY TO FUCK ME. HIS PALE BLUE EYES LOOKED AS FREAKED OUT AS MINE DID. I GOT UP TO WASH MYSELF OFF IN THE BATHROOM AND FLUFFY RAN ALONG SIDE OF ME, EXCITED & CONFUSED. I BEGAN TO FEEL REMORSEFUL...


THE Lady AND THE TRAMP!
XXX
TA
CAB

...LIKE I HAD SEXUALLY ABUSED HIM AND KEPT PATTING HIM AND APOLOGIZING. I COULDN'T SHAKE THAT BODY REPULSION THOUGH AND SORT OF WISHED FLUFFY HAD HIS OWN APARTMENT TO GO TO SO I COULD BE ALONE, AND NOT REMINDED OF HIM. (AT LEAST WITH MEN, YOU CAN SEND THEM AWAY AFTERWARDS IF YOU'RE NOT INTO THEM.)

WHEN I CRAWLED BACK INTO BED, FLUFFY TOOK HIS PLACE AT MY SIDE. I REALIZED THAT WE PROBABLY BOTH HAD THE SAME EXPRESSION ON OUR FACES. WE WERE BOTH HORNY AND CONFUSED. AND WE WERE PROBABLY THINKING THE SAMETHING "WRONG SPECIES." fin



PUNK ROCK & NOTHING BUT.

LATEX GENERATION

"360"

Straight outta New York! Attitude filled, sing-a-long songs every young punk should have! East coast style similar to Ramones, Weston and Bouncing Souls!

RACER TEN

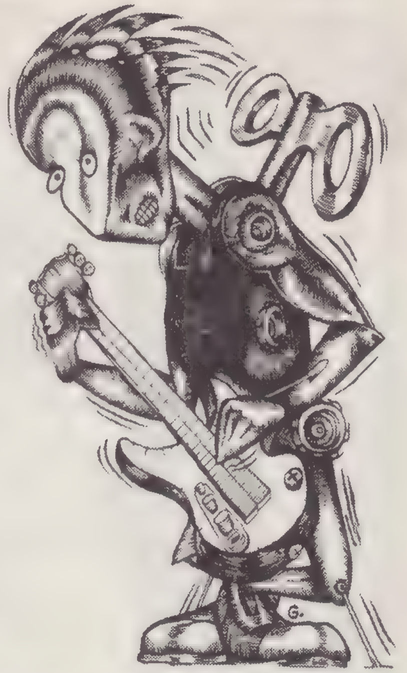
"melodies and memories"

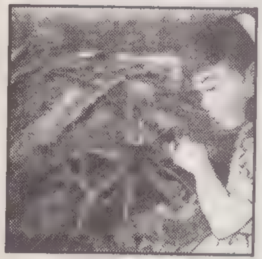
Prarie punks from Canada. KISS, NOFX, Rush and Cat Stevens are just a few of the influences you'll hear on this great album!

CRANK

"picking up the pieces"

Combining melody with the hardcore edge of bands like Poison Idea, Black Flag and classic Bad Brains! These guys deliver the goods!





STEADFAST

"sixteen reasons why"

Four young punks from Connetictut rocking and rolling in a Queers/Crimpshrine fashion!

BLITZ BABIEZ

"thought spawn"

Ass-kicking rhythms that'll make you want to dance on broken glass! A little like No Use For A Name with female vocals.

PEP RALLY

"deadline"

Punk rock from the UK! A unique blend of So. Cal rhythm, UK attitude and a wee bit of ska.

PO Box 3834
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034-0592
Fax: (609) 663 4764
Distributed by Rotz, MS and Cargo Canada

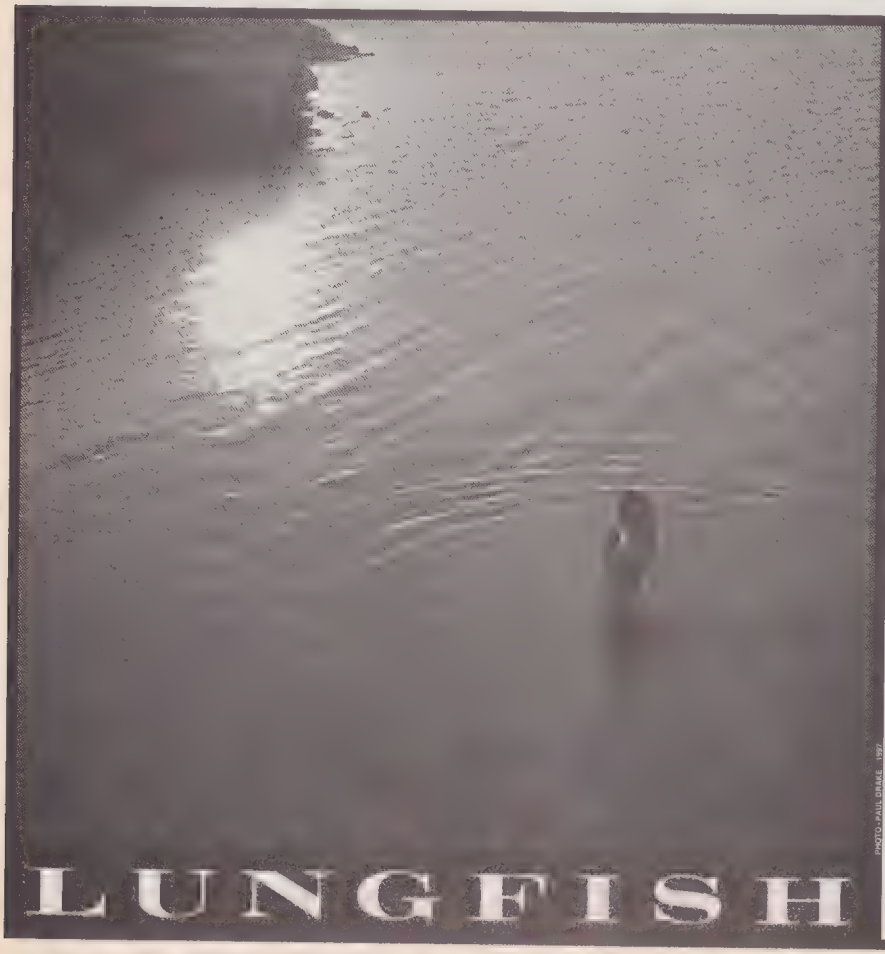


PHOTO: PAUL DRAKE 1997

Records & Stuff We Sell:

106. LUNGFISH 'Indivisible' * Ⓒ
105. MAKE-UP Recorded Live at the Fine China in London 'After Dark' * Ⓒ
104. TRUSTY 'The Fourth Wise Man' * Ⓒ
103. FIRE PARTY complete discography Ⓓ
102. THE WARMERS self-titled * Ⓒ
101. BLUETIP 'Dischord No. 101' * Ⓒ
100. THE TEEN IDLES 6 unreleased tracks from 1980 by Dischord's founders †† Ⓐ
99. THE MAKE-UP 'Destination: Love, LIVE! at Cold Rice!' * Ⓒ
98. THE CROWNHATE RUIN 'Until the Eagle Grins' * Ⓒ
96. SMART WENT CRAZY 'Now We're Even' * Ⓒ
95. BRANCH MANAGER self-titled * Ⓒ
90. FUGAZI 'Red Medicine' †* Ⓒ
71. NATION OF ULYSSES 'Plays Pretty for Baby' †* Ⓒ
40. MINOR THREAT CD has every song! Ⓔ
14. DISCHORD 1981 'The Year in Seven Inches' Ⓓ

*regular CD, price Ⓓ / † Cassette, price Ⓒ / †† CD single, price Ⓖ

NEW **Price Guide, including postage, in U.S. $:**

		U.S.A.	SURFACE & CANADA	Airmail
Ⓐ	7"	3.50	4.50	6.50
Ⓒ	LP	8.00	10.00	13.00
Ⓓ	CD	9.00	10.00	12.00
Ⓔ	MaxiCD	11.00	12.00	14.00
Ⓖ	CD single	4.00	5.00	7.00

http://www.southern.com/dischord/ dischord@dischord.com
Stores: We deal direct. Write us or fax us at (703) 351-7582

Illustrated **CATALOG!** please send one US $ or 4 US Stamps or 4 IRCs.

For a plain but complete LIST of records, send us a US stamp or an IRC.

3819 BEECHER ST. NW, WASH., D.C. 20007-1802

DEFINITION: SUPER!

Recently I got a writing assignment from this new teen mag, which started typically with, "I really like your writing..." This is how it always starts, but no one ever prints anything I do for them. In this case, the editor liked the masturbation article I'd written in our last issue. She said, "We're going be something like *Sassy,* and I'd love for you to do something like that for us." Eventually they sent me copies, and what they were doing was worse than *Teen* – it was more like pre-*Teen.* And slowly her approach became, "I don't think we can do this," and "maybe we can tone it down a little." In the end, I was just going to write some zine and comic reviews. I wrote about *Definition.* The review went like so: One of my new favorites. A lucid comic novella, drawn, written, and created completely by high schooler Ariel Schrag. Initially started as a freshman under the title *Awkward,* this particular collection covers Ariel's whole sophomore year. It starts off fast, with the first panel depicting a female schoolmate trying to convince her she's possibly a lesbian ("You're a dyke!!!"). She continues her school year innocently exploring her sexuality, science class, best friendship, and love for No Doubt (when applying make-up it's called "applying Gwen"). This is definition: brilliant! **We went from masturbation to the reality that Americana (dictated by lawyers and advertisers) still isn't ready for life (sexuality) from the point of view of a young woman. In the end, the magazine wouldn't print any of my reviews, which inspired the following interview.**

Darby: Was *Awkward* your first comic?

Ariel: It was the first comic I did about my life, but I did other comic books when I was young. When I was really little, I did these books with my mom – I would draw pictures and I would tell my mom what to write at the bottom. Some of the stuff was really crazy. There'd be this picture of a kid, with these really long spikes coming out of it. The text would say: "The baby ate poisoned nails." Then in third grade, I did this book called "A Day in the Life of Lucy Hound." I was obsessed with dogs. It was about this girl that wanted this dog and lived her life with her dog. And that was my dream.

Awww... Did you ever have a dog?

Yeah, but now the dog lives at my dad's house because my parents got divorced and my dad has claimed the dog as his property.

Oh. When did your parents get divorced?

Last year.

So this is drama in the upcoming comic... is it going to be called *Definition* also?

No, *Potential.*

Ooh. I like it! I assume that your parents are cool, just because of the fact that you're able to do this and they haven't locked you up in the closet.

Funny thing is they come off as these easy-going "The Parents". And then in the next book, because something actually happened involving them, they're suddenly two main characters that have more depth. It's kind of weird.

I was going to ask you later on what your parents think of all this, in that as you are writing about your own life, your parents have to figure that they're going to have a starring role.

It's actually kind of interesting, because my mom is all into the fact that I'm going to be writing about her getting a divorce. She was the one that wanted the divorce, so of course, she comes out triumphant in the sense that she's not the rejected one. But my dad on the other hand, is kind of freaked out. He's all, "You should put a disclaimer, don't make me look like an asshole..." My mom's like "Write whatever you like, honey!"

Because your dad cheated on her?

No, no. My mom just decided she didn't want to be married to him anymore. It's just in her personality that she would want me to be free and real. She doesn't really know what I wrote. She's into being supportive. My dad is supportive, but he's also a little bit more concerned about making it a public issue. I don't really want my dad to read the book at all, but I don't have a choice about that.

Have any of your friends been offended?

Well, yeah. There was this whole scandal, it was awkward because these girls thought I made them look like druggies, and they were mad about that. And it's totally legitimate, I don't blame them.

These are the ones you hang out with for six weeks and smoke pot with all the time?

Yeah. They have a right to be mad that I did this comic book about them and didn't ask. I know I didn't say anything that wasn't true, but I was really sorry that they were unhappy about it. Since then I've been more careful.

I'm curious about Leonard...

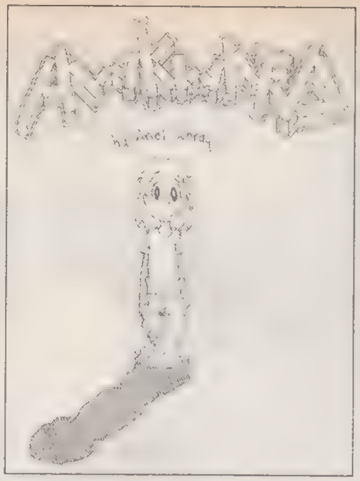
A lot of people ask about Leonard. The thing with him is I did talk to him before I wrote the book. I told him what I wanted to put in the books and he said okay.

That's neat. I love his character. When he's carrying you... I mean, it's just so funny. I love what you're able to do with the visuals. Because when I look at that picture, that is the feeling I get when I like a guy a lot. It's this protective feeling, like he could just scoop you up and carry you. It's an illusion guys give. It's not very often.

The funny thing is I could have given a shit, and he was really into that. He's kind of a... Rosary, that dumbass bitch, she read the book and her only remark was "thanks for the 'plastic' comment." That was lame, because I was admitting my worship of her. I never even talked to her about it. A girl told me that she read it.; so you never know. This one girl, she had a small part, her name was Scarlet. She was mad because she thought I drew her uglier than the girl Estelle. Whatever. She was just as pretty. You can't please anybody. Luckily, nobody was really upset about *Definition.*

So Rosary was also in *Awkward*... but you were still friends with her after that, because you didn't go into your devotion to her.

When I was writing *Awkward,* I was really obsessed



with Rosary – her real name is Carrie. I was really obsessed with Carrie and I kept thinking about how she was going to read it when I was writing it. And the whole thing about L7 was… I was trying to make myself sound particularly cool and L7 knowledgeable, because I wanted her to read it. I had a panel that was originally supposed to say "I love Carrie, but I changed it at the last minute – I shouldn't have.

You want to be able to represent your life without necessarily having to affect it.

The thing is I really changed. There's so much stuff in *Awkward* that in my Ninth Grade Year... the girl Elizabeth? I was in *love* with her the entire year. Insanely in love. I wrote all these love poems. Spent all this time in agony because I was infatuated with her. I couldn't put that in! But now I'm older and I'm a senior, and I'm not as prone to awkwardness, so I put in all the stuff. *Potential* is at a really different level than *Awkward* as far as personal stuff goes. It's just a lot more serious... not serious, it has a lot...

***Definition* had a lot! From *Awkward* to *Definition* was such a huge leap. And it is, in a girl's life, ninth grade to tenth grade – I guess in anyone's life it's a leap. Even though *Awkward* was brilliant, you really get to see what happens in the course of a year.**

I really feel that *Potential* is honest, and a totally different level from *Definition*. It talks about things that I never would have mentioned in *Definition*. It makes a difference every year; I have an easier time talking about personal things. And with *Potential*, because it was so personal, I had these conferences with people, where we talked about what I could put in or not. There's still stuff that I have in there that I know could upset people. There's actually one chapter in particular that is causing a major controversy with one of my friends.

Like you've already done it and…

I already wrote it and he doesn't know what it is, but he can't imagine that it would be good in any way, because it's about a subject that he's not pleased that I wrote about. And then, with this other girl, I wrote a lot of really personal things about her and she was really nice. She let me write a lot of personal things that other people wouldn't have let me write. But, at the same time, I also had to leave out things that I would have wanted to put in but that she didn't want me to.

I still think that it's totally honorable that Leonard let you put in all that stuff with his pink jeans and getting his hair cut and how he's totally changed.

It really meant a lot to me that he did that.

That's like having the period when your voice changes be totally documented. [Laughs] So, some of the names were changed?

All of the names were changed, except for me and Julia's.

Why did the self-published printings of *Definition* state "this is a work of fiction"?

It was mainly a joke. Everybody that was involved knows it's not fiction. Then the school newspaper did this article about it, and they were like, "Although Ariel's characters are fiction, everyone knows..." I don't really feel the need to do it for the next one, but my dad wants me to.

Worried that someone might sue?

He just wants me to put it there for his own sake.

You say your school is big, but a lot of people know, "Oh, there's Ariel. If I say hi to her, she might write about me!"

I don't really know about that. At the end of the year, when I was talking with an ex-girlfriend of mine, the girl that I went out with for all of Junior Year – there's a lot of personal stuff about her in the comic book. We kind of got into, not really a fight, she just got upset. And, all of a sudden, she was like, "Why do people talk to you? I can't understand!" I was like, "I don't know..." What was I supposed to say? I don't really know what to think about it. It gets increasingly worse. It's just like, voilá, here's life. It complicates a lot of things a lot of times. And so many people that I hang out with are, "Is this me in the comic book?" Every time I'm anywhere. Some really personal moment will be happening, some really intimate conversation, and all of a sudden, they'll have to add in, "this can't go in the comic book!"

That's kind of like… I have this thing about people who always take photos every time anything looks pretty. It's like, you spoil the moment, either by taking the picture or posing for the picture or you're thinking about the picture. That must be kind of annoying when someone interrupts the moment to proclaim "No, this is my life!"

Plus, there's this whole thing about recording stuff for next year. I can't have a normal journal. Something happens that was kind of important to me, but maybe I won't write about it because it's not going to go in the comic this year. Then something big will happen and I'll write a lot about it, which is good – it forces me to write when otherwise I might not do it. But I would just do neurotic things like photocopy letters before I sent them to people. That's unhealthy! [Laughs]

I do that sometimes. But you know what, sometimes it's good, because you realize… sometimes you think you wrote the most brilliant letter in the world, especially when it's a relationship kind of letter. Obviously, you're always right whenever you're in a relationship. When you read these back a year or two later it's like: "God! How disgusting I am." So it doesn't have to be totally unhealthy.

I was going around with a tape recorder.

You always carry one?

I did. I was really into that last year, but now I want to kind of try to go along normally.

I don't know if you've seen the magazine, but everything's kind of a personal issue. You go see a show, but we don't really write just a show review. For me, writing doesn't mean anything unless it's personalized. Personalizing it is a sneaky way to get around the fact that I'm not a great writer. So I'm seeing a show and the words of how I'm going to review it are playing in my head while it's going on.

Oh god, that's the worst... I'll do something and then it's like flashed before my eyes in comic-book form.

The pictures? I was going to ask… so you can see the set-up?

Sometimes it's good, but so many crucial moments happen and I can't help thinking about them that way.

Sexually, that could be disgusting.

Yaaa! It gets really complicated.

I mean, I've seen some of the sexually disgusting ones in *Definition*. I saw you drawing a penis in there! It was really gross and hairy! [Laughs]

Grosser in real life. [Laughs] I don't know, that happens a lot. But sometimes it's good. The one good thing about the comic book's affect on my life is that it does make bad experiences appreciated. If a bad experience happens, it doesn't just turn into a bad experience that I want to be over – I can kind of relish in it.

Immediately it can be funny…

Yeah. Totally.

If chemistry gives something "clean and pure" in your life to balance out other less pure aspects, what would drawing your comics be?

Everything combined into one purpose.

Definition: Your life?

Basically. [Laughs] It's kind of weird, because I don't feel like I've become some extremely different person since I started writing them. It's made a dramatic change, but it's not like I've transformed or anything. I kind of feel like it's why I was born.

Really?

And that I was meant to do it and that everything in my life has lead up to it. It just means everything. It is, without a doubt, the most important thing to me.

Yay! So you're not going to stop any time soon, I'm gathering. [Laughs]

I just feel like everything I do in my life is just to aid my comic writing some way. Like, I want to read more books, I want to meet more people in order to...

I'm really kind of a black and white kind of person. Usually, people are pretty or pretty ugly. Especially in a comic book, there's a lot of black and white stuff.

with unimportance and insignifigance. All the doubts and wonders about kissing thrust aside with a laugh because

So, it's kind of a visa-versa, circular effect there.

Oh, definitely. It's very nice and cyclical.

So, music. Music has a big place...

Music is kind of a weird thing. The thing about music is... I don't listen to No Doubt or L7 anymore. I don't *not* listen to them because I think they're bad, I just don't listen to it because I'm done with it. You get to a certain point where it's like... I've listened to No Doubt's albums so many times, I've seen them seven times in concert. There's nothing more to do. It gets boring. And if I want to hear the songs, I'll just sing them to myself, you know. I know every chord. The music thing is about obsession... I don't think I'm going to be obsessed with bands any more. There are other things to be obsessed with. I think I'm an obsessive person and I can't really change that, but... music is a very weird topic for me. I always feel like I'm kind of undermining it, and at the same time... my mom is a composer. She's with her music the way I am with my comics. Really absorbed in them and into self-expression. Music is her thing. And I try to talk about it to her through comic books... I don't really know what to say about music. [Laughs] I get scared when people ask me about it. I'm not a musician. I played the violin, I played the piano, I played the guitar, but I certainly couldn't speak about it on any level that any musician or composer could. I'm just a screaming fan. Music, to a certain percentage of screaming fans means a lot, and to another percentage means they're having fun being obsessed and in a scene. I was one of those scene people! [Laughs] I was really into wearing the t-shirts and ripping the jeans and writing names on my backpack. But I wrote bands on my backpack that I didn't know their music! That's not very cool. I don't know what to really say.

I think it would be great to walk fast with Joe Matt

Okay, then we'll move on to movies.

Ahh, Juliette! [Laughs] I still love Juliette Lewis. She's totally different from the bands. She was my first... she really represents a lot to me, really beyond just obsession. More than that, she turned my neurotic childhood obsessions into a nice normal girl-obsessed obsession... I seriously thought about her. Just thought about her.

Sexually thought about her.

Totally. I have this poster of her on my wall and I would kiss it goodnight before I went to sleep. I would fondle her breasts.

I'm sure she liked that.

Juliette Lewis. I don't want to meet Juliette Lewis. No way. That would be horrible. I just think she's really sexy, she's real hot. I'm certainly not obsessed like I was before, but I don't have any problems saying that I'm not obsessed with L7 or No Doubt anymore. Fine, phase done with. But with Juliette it's like, sure, for a certain time it was a phase, but she means more than that. She was the first girl that I openly talked about liking; even though it was in this weird convoluted way. I was in Junior High and she was the beginning of all sexual direction.

You were saying you set up weird situations in order to, not necessarily to stalk...

More just... if I'm into a person and like them, then I'll do abnormal things like...

Yes, some examples...

Well, I don't want to give away any *Potential*. I was really into my girlfriend. And I thought about her a lot, and I did a lot of weird things.

And we'll be reading about them shortly. I'm sure she loved every minute of it.

Nothing hella crazy or anything, but I was really into her.

You're older now. Are you still exploring your sexuality, or have you pretty much decided you're bisexual?

The funny thing is, I pretty much decided I wasn't really that bisexual. That summer of Tenth Grade I wrote *Definition*, I went out with two boys in a row and decided that I wasn't that interested in it. I didn't really want to keep going out with this boy and I really liked this girl, and that meant that I had to tell him that I was a homosexual, because I had to break up with him. I couldn't break up with him because I wanted to be a homosexual for the next three months or something. I was like, "You know what, I think I'm gay." Then I went out with this girl and I was totally in love with her. It became very clear to me that I liked girls significantly more than boys. And then I went out with the other girl, the main girl, and was totally in love with her. At that point it was just decided. I have a lot of mixed, complicated, extremely long, detailed, in depth ideas and questions about the whole sexuality thing in general. Basically at this point, sex is kind of interesting in general, so I'm kind of interested in having sex with boys, but I'm not really interested in having a boyfriend. And sex with girls is much more enjoyable to me. The sex I've had with girls is way above the sex that I've had with boys. It's just on a different level of enjoyment. When I had a girlfriend, I thought about them every second, and when I had boyfriends I was just like, fine, whatever – I spent a lot of time avoiding having sex. [Laughs] It wasn't very fun. I used to think that was normal. The funny thing is when I was going out with this boy, Brian, I had this thing where I was like, "Monogamy is the stupidest idea! I mean, what the hell, we're teenagers, we shouldn't be monogamous." That was just because I wanted to fuck a girl. That had nothing to do with not wanting to be monogamous. When I had a girlfriend, I would scream and freak out when she kissed somebody else. So it was kind of like a denial thing. I just like girls more than boys.

It was enjoyable exploring your sexuality with you through your cartoon. What I like about the cartoon versions of sexuality... comic drawings, having the rounded edges, everything is more bubbly and fun. Like you were saying, even your horrible experiences... all the sexual ones, there's something less harsh about sex and everything in the comic format... and often the characters are sexier in the form of cartoon characters than in real life.

I hope I'm sexier in real life than I am in cartoons!

[Laughs] I'm sure you are!

I don't have any breasts in *Definition*; I drew some in *Potential*, though.

In real life people have hard edges and zits – while most of your characters are soft edged and sweet. But when you draw strangers, especially when they're men, they're all hideous and gross. Like the time you're at the arcade and the boys became evil.

I just think that people in general... I'm really kind of a black and white kind of person. Usually, people are pretty or pretty ugly. Especially in a comic book, there's a lot of black and white stuff.

now I knew, it seemed like it lasted for hours and hours as I treasured every second taking in everything,

Right, but every time there's a stranger or you're scared, the way you represent the world changes. When you're scared, everyone becomes ugly men! [Laughs]

Ugly men are pretty much the scariest things.

That's true!

I don't know, pretty girls can be scary too, but in a different sort of way.

Yeah, they torture you from the inside-out, instead of the outside-in.

And that's kind of basically what it's about. The comic. If I'm drawing some guys in some situation, they're probably going to end up ugly, because that's how I remember it, you know? I have trouble drawing pretty people. Guys are always trying to get me to draw pretty girls for them, but girls always come out really ugly. I can't help it. I can draw things that are cute and ugly, but I have trouble drawing things that are pretty. That picture of Gwen took forever, because I couldn't make her pretty.

I thought she was totally cute and pretty.

Eventually. I copied it from a picture in a magazine, which made it easier. But the pictures of Carrie, she's not a pretty girl, in real life. But I wanted to make her look really pretty. I kind of half-succeeded.

I was going to ask you what your fears are. When I was thinking of questions, I was flipping through and I noticed on the *Definition* cover is this weird image where you look like you're scared. I guess that's a two-fold question: what, besides ugly leering men, are the fears in your life? And describe what the cover image is all about.

I'm really scared of being lost.

God, you represent the being lost part fucking well! With your dad and doing the maps and trying to make sure you have all the super duper directions... It's horrible, especially when you're young and poor and can't even make a phone call.

Yeah, it's scary. That's a continuous fear of mine.

Was San Jose – for me, anytime someone mentions the word "Pasadena", I get lost – is "San Jose" that for you? And now you're on a comic book label from San Jose.

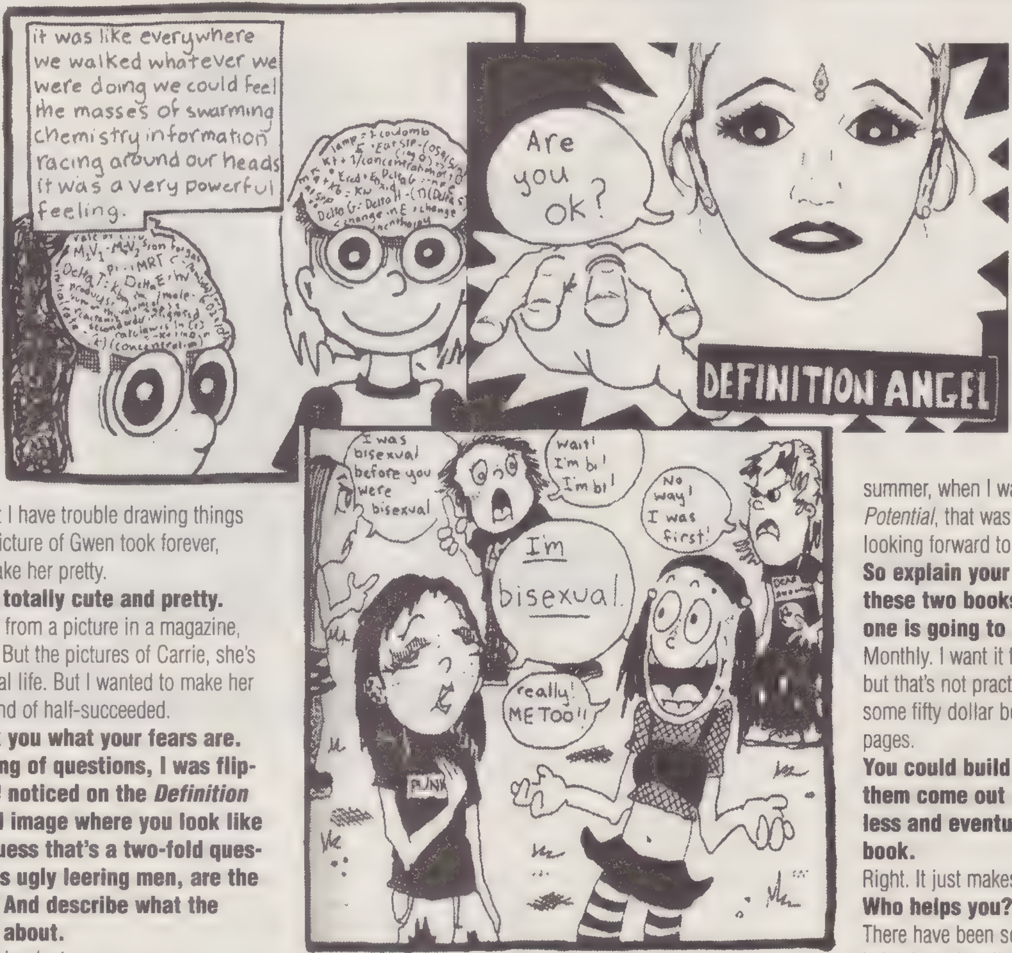
I think that's so ironic. Of course, when I went to pick up the book, I got lost! I had to call ask them how to get there. "I'm somewhere lost in the middle of San Jose..."

So what other things besides getting lost? Was your parents getting a divorce a fear?

No, I wanted my parents to get divorced when I was little, because I thought it would be fun and I wanted to be like Stacey in *The Baby-sitter's Club*. I also wanted to have Diabetes. I liked Stacey. I liked MaryAnne the best, though. The books were my life. My parents getting divorced, I wasn't really scared of that. As far as the cover goes, I'm not really supposed to be afraid, I'm just supposed to be anxious.

Another one on the list is school...

I love school. [Laughs] I love my classes now. I am in Heaven. I'm not taking math. I'm taking French. French can suck my dick. But apart from French, the only classes I'm taking are Psychology, English, and Anatomy. Then I have two periods of Art with the love of my life, my teacher, Miss Fall. You should put that in, that I love her.


it was like everywhere we walked whatever we were doing we could feel the masses of swarming chemistry information racing around our heads it was a very powerful feeling.
Are you ok?
DEFINITION ANGEL
I was bisexual before you were bisexual
wait! I'm bi! I'm bi!
No way! I was first!
I'm bisexual.
really! ME TOO!!
PUNK

How old is she?

She's 26. She's this cool dyke rock scenester who knows everybody and everybody knows her. She doesn't even teach a third period, but she lets me stay in her office and draw anyway. She lets me work on my comic book in her office alone. My Anatomy teacher is great, too. She's this forty-five year old dyke, so I get both generations. She's just so smart, she knows so much. Anatomy is Heaven. And Psychology is cool, too. But I just love it all.

What are you going to do? Are you going to art school or college?

I'm applying early to Barnard.

What's Barnard? Is that an art school?

No, no. It's a division of Columbia.

Oh, okay. So what is your major going to be?

Probably English.

So your chemistry days are behind you?

Oh, I still love chemistry... I'm still going to take science courses in college. Undoubtedly I'll take them, but I don't want to major in it, because I don't want to be a research scientist. I don't want to spend my days...

You always get stuck killing rats eventually.

I really like accumulating the knowledge, but I don't have any motivation to do anything with it. I don't go out and do experiments, I don't go around dissecting things. I still love Science, but it doesn't sound like a very practical major. I want to be a comic book artist, but I don't expect that to be my full job or anything. It just seems kind of weird that I would be a scientist and then this comic book artist on the side. I'd rather be a teacher, basically. Which is kind of sad, because I really like the idea of teaching Science probably more than teaching English.

Maybe it would take the fun out of it if you majored in it, anyway.

I definitely want to do something else besides draw comics, because then that becomes the work. And over the summer, when I was writing the rough draft of *Potential*, that was work. I don't like that, I like looking forward to doing it.

So explain your new setup. You have these two books. And now the next one is going to come out...

Monthly. I want it to come out as one book, but that's not practical at all. It would be like some fifty dollar book, because it's 224 pages.

You could build up interest by having them come out more often and cost less and eventually do it as a big book.

Right. It just makes a lot more sense.

Who helps you?

There have been so many people that have helped me. I really want to give them all credit and it would be impossible. People like teachers that have edited for me and have plugged the comic book to kids in their classes. Like this teacher Mr. Vaultz, this teacher Reggie Furhiman. Those are two teachers that have really really helped me. And so many people in the comic business have helped me. Obviously, the person that has helped me the most is Dan Vado (Slave Labor publisher). Just a lot of people have really cared. My aunt and uncle have helped me a lot. My parents. Jessica, my ex-girlfriend, she really really helped me with selling *Potential*. She put so much effort into helping me sell and work with it.

What do you mean sell?

She came to all the comic conventions Junior year with me. I self-published it before Slave Labor did. She helped with all that stuff. She silk-screened for me. My sister helped a lot. My best friend, Julia. Toby. These are all people that have helped sell.

Do you have any comic idols?

Oh yeah, totally. As a kid, the first comic I liked was

every move of her tongue, every clank of her tongue pierce against my teeth, every press of her fingertips against

the room was shifting around in a clumsy circle and I think we ate some potstickers but there was always Leonard, just there, always there, lying naked in the middle
eventually he went home and Josephine and I went to sleep

Uncle Scrooge. I collected all the *Uncle Scrooges* as a young child. I was into basically all the Disney comics: Mickey Mouse a little bit, Donald Duck and all those. Then after a while, I kind of stopped with the *Uncle Scrooge* thing... I got really into *Mad Magazine*. Then in Eighth, I was obsessed with Lynn Johnson who draws *For Better or For Worse*.

The comic in the newspaper? Your style is a little bit similar to that.

She is definitely my biggest influence by far. She has gotten fucking bad in the past two years. But, you know, '93-94, she was really good. I really like her drawing style. Oh, that reminds me, I never finished telling you about those comics that I did as a kid. The precursor to *Awkward* were these little *Awkward* strips – but before that in Eighth grade I did this kind of *For Better or For Worse* modeled strip called *Live it Like Me*. I was named Alexis and I gave myself a boyfriend, even though I didn't have one. I had a family that was modeled after my own family. Then for a while I thought I had to be a syndicated columnist or newspaper panel strip person. I didn't really know there was anything else. I didn't want to write superhero comics, because I think that shit sucks. I wanted to write about me. That's the most interesting thing.

Of course!

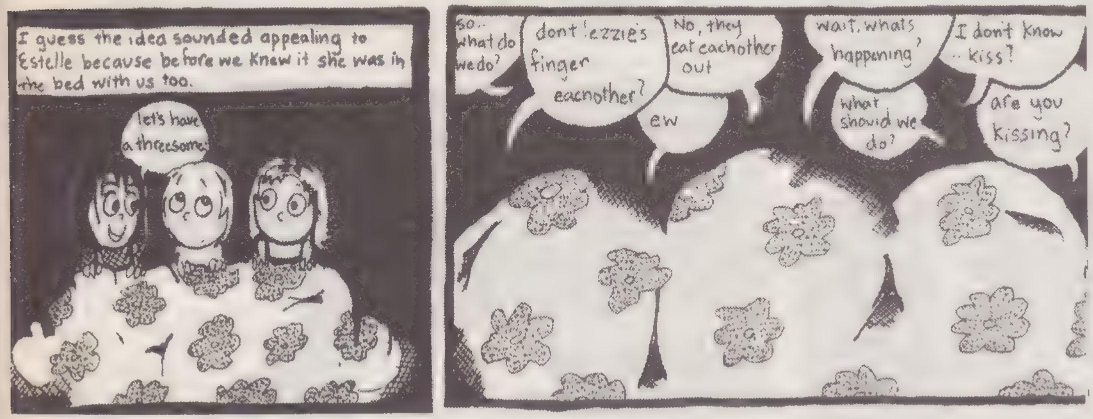
I didn't want to draw ducks. Then one day I discovered *Deep Girl* by Ariel Bordeaux, and I was like, "Oh, there's a different kind of comic strip! This one is pretty raunchy." She thinks about stuff that I think about. She doesn't always just think about kids and chaos. I was really into *Deep Girl* and put some little *Deep Girl* patch on my backpack. And I started writing *Awkward*. Then after that, I suddenly realized that there was this entire other realm of comic books – Alternative comic books. And I started buying a lot of *Optic Nerve*, bought a lot of Joe Matt, *Stray Bullet*, stuff like that. I wanted to get them all, I wanted to be knowledgeable. I didn't know anything. I was writing this comic, but didn't know what I was doing. I went around buying as many comics as I could. I bought a lot of zines too. I found out about that whole area I didn't know about before. I realized I was part of this thing. Then I kind of became more "refined" with my taste. But the big thing I was going to get to was *Maus*, by Art Spiegleman. My dad bought it, he was really into it – and R. Crumb too. See, the comic thing is all really complicated. I actually was reading R. Crumb and *Maus* because my dad had them. All the R. Crumb were up on this shelf. When he was out of the house, I would get up and steal them because I wasn't allowed to look at them. They were interesting! I'd read all those, but I never connected the two until later. And I realized what I liked, and I realized that *Maus* and R.Crumb were the same as these. And right now, the comic book that I would say I aspire to the most would be *Maus,* in that it tells a story that's really important to the author. He put so much time into it; you can tell how much it means to him. It's really well written and has effective pictures. Similarly, is Joe Matt's *Peep Show. Peep Show* is my favorite comic. *Maus* is different. It's not a comic book. It's not serialized. It won the fucking Pulitzer. I certainly don't fit in the same category as it, and I do fit in the same category as – not to say that I'm the same level, but in the same realm – as *Peep Show*. Joe Matt is definitely my favorite comic book artist. I love everything he does.

I went through a Joe Matt phase. Actually, he pushed his book on me at a comic convention.

Really? Wow!

I'm like, "I don't have any money for this hard cover book." He said, "It's a bargain and I'll do a drawing." Out of pity I agreed. And I had no idea that I was going to be sitting in my bedroom reading every page. I had *Peep Shows* all over my bed. I ended up trying to find every single issue of any new one that came after the book. So I became a *Peep Show* fanatic.

That's so cool, I never met him. I want to. I'm a really a fast walker. I totally understand his walking thing. I am always walking so much faster than everybody else. I think it would be great to walk fast with Joe Matt!


I guess the idea sounded appealing to Estelle because before we knew it she was in the bed with us too.
let's have a threesome!
so.. what do we do?
dont lezzie's finger eachother?
No, they eat eachother out
ew
wait, whats happening?
what should we do?
I don't know .. kiss?
are you kissing?

[Laughs] That would be wonderful. That would be a dream.

When I met him he had short hair. The long-haired drawings... ugh, he looks so gross in comic form. That's one of the few where the person doesn't look better as a comic character. He actually was cuter in person.

Interesting. I just think he's phenomenal. I copy so much shit from him. His whole thing about how he copied R. Crumb and all that... Well, here I am, completing the cycle! There's this one strip in *Cartoon Diary* where he's kind of lazing around the house and he's talking about where his life is headed. He's kind of slumped down on the couch and he says, "And then there's always the idea that I'm making my life exciting just for my comic books." And he stays, and there's like two more panels in the same position. And then he says, "Maybe not." [Laughs] In *Potential*, there's a page that is similar to that. It's not the same quote, but it's the same technique.

I think a lot of the aspects of autobiographical comics he captures really well. Especially when the girlfriend's looking over his shoulder, going, "That's not what happened!" He has the pathetic tormented male thing. He does that so well, that's just so fun to participate in. The trials and tribulations of his pathetic character.

So, I ended up with two copies of *Definition*. Now I have three, because I have the new glossy edition. People have been renting it out, because every time someone comes over, I go "You have to see this...*and bring it back!*"

Cool.

...We moved so I threw out tons of things, gave away almost my whole zine collection, and then kept a batch stuff that looked interesting and set up a little library. So it ended up in there. Eventually I discovered all these great comics, one of which has been yours and this other is a girl who does a comic book called *Cuckoo*.

I've never seen that.

Oh, you have to see *Cuckoo*. It's a girl who has a multiple personality disorder and she draws her comic in all of her personalities. It's so beautiful, it's like a work of art. I feel privileged to be involved as a reader. I have one extra copy somewhere – I'll send it to you.

Call Slave Labor for ordering info if you can't find *Definition* or *Potential* in your local comic book store: 1-800/866-8929.

my neck as me mind repeated over and over what was happening. I can't believe this is happening.

LIMITED EDITION EP

SUPER REMIXES...SUPER NEW SONGS...SUPER LOW PRICE...SUPER RELAX!

cibo matto

SUPER RELAX

sleestak

the power: of. gemini(a)

SLEESTAK. NEW 72 MINUTE CD. 10$ PPD.

DEBUT FULL LENGTHFROM THESE LA BASED NOISE BEHEMOTHS

"ELECTRO-METALLIC PUNISHMENT IN THE MANNER OF A WOUNDEDDINOSAUR"

- ALTERNATIVE PRESS

ALSO: 7'S WITH MUSIC BY THESE HIT MAKERS:
GERALDINE FIBBERS,
GRANDADDY, PAPER TULIPS,
ECOLI, DEEP TRACTION, BAKAMONO,
SARASPODEN AND FARFLUNG.

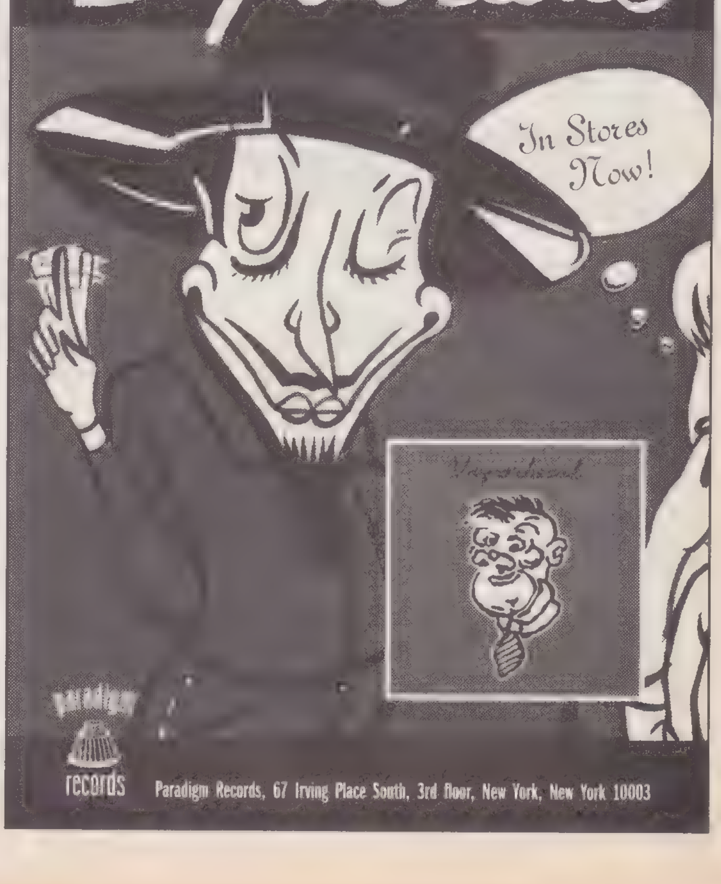
ALL 7"s 3.50 PPD,
EXCEPT THE FARFLUNG PIC. DISC - $5 PPD

distributed by NAIL, subterranean, revolver and bottlenekk

BIG JESUS ENTERPRISES

Write for a catalog
PO BOX 292152
LOS ANGELES Ca. 90029

Vaporhead

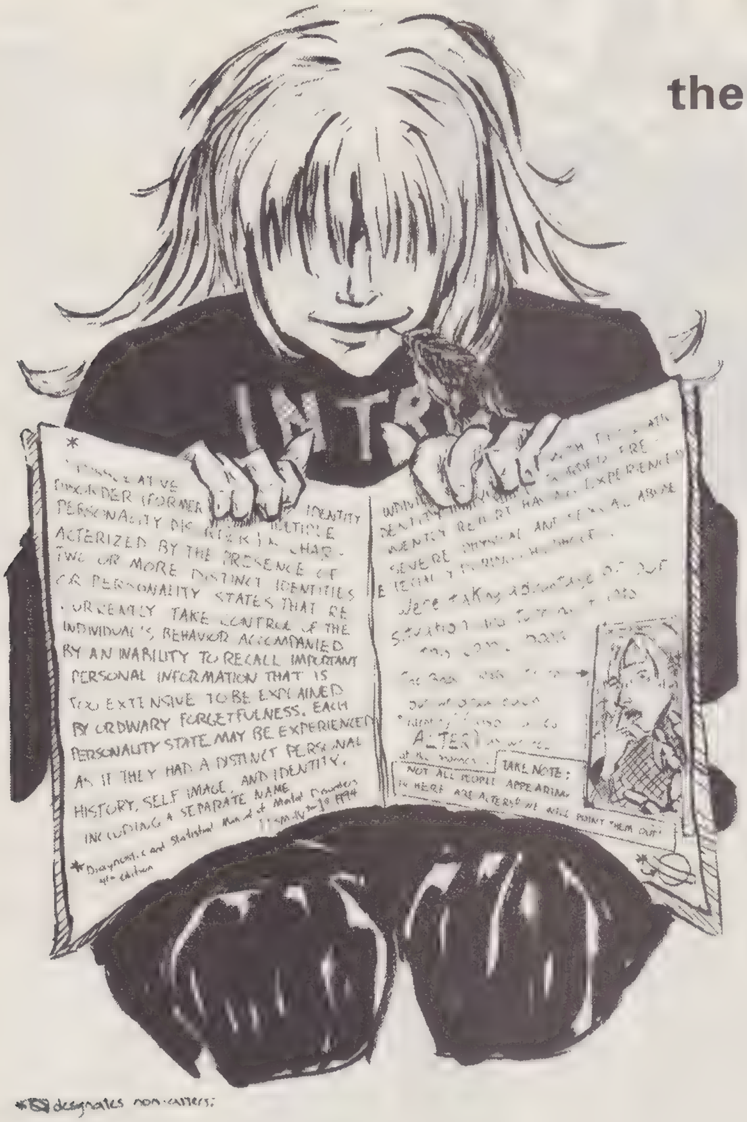


paradigm records

Paradigm Records, 67 Irving Place South, 3rd floor, New York, New York 10003

Cuckoo

BY DARBY

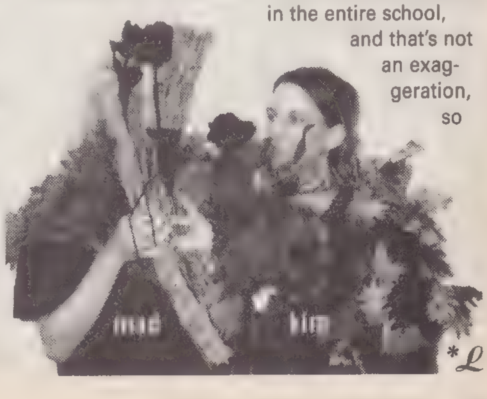

INTR
*
DISSOCIATIVE
DISORDER (FORMERLY
PERSONALITY DISORDER) ... IDENTITY ... MULTIPLE ... CHAR-
ACTERIZED BY THE PRESENCE OF
TWO OR MORE DISTINCT IDENTITIES
OR PERSONALITY STATES THAT RE-
CURRENTLY TAKE CONTROL OF THE
INDIVIDUAL'S BEHAVIOR ACCOMPANIED
BY AN INABILITY TO RECALL IMPORTANT
PERSONAL INFORMATION THAT IS
TOO EXTENSIVE TO BE EXPLAINED
BY ORDINARY FORGETFULNESS. EACH
PERSONALITY STATE MAY BE EXPERIENCED
AS IF THEY HAD A DISTINCT PERSONAL
HISTORY, SELF IMAGE, AND IDENTITY,
INCLUDING A SEPARATE NAME
*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 4th edition
ALTER
TAKE NOTE:
NOT ALL PEOPLE APPEARING IN HERE ARE ALTERS; WE WILL POINT THEM OUT
*☒ designates non-alters;

Lorraine and I arrived at the Comic Con last summer

just in time to gallantly parade about the place in our superhero Underoos, and first thing we do is run to the small press comics area. A beautiful skinny girl with long blond hair is sitting alone behind a decorated table displaying her wares. Just above her a sign reads "Cuckoo". I walk up, a little nervous, "Who's crazy around here?" I ask, immediately wondering why I let myself say things like that. Madison Clell responds warmly. I can't believe she's actually here. These things are so overwhelming. You either have to be crazy to want to be at a comic book convention, or at the very least you'll be crazy when you leave. She tells me her cohort Kim is trying to get in. The goal, and one of the main reasons I came to this convention at all, is to talk with both of them. See, a month or so back I discovered *Cuckoo* displayed among some magazines in a new magazine rack we put up in our bathroom. But unlike the rest of the pop art, I could never get past the first few pages. It wasn't so easy to skim. It was obvious I was going to have to make a greater effort; this wasn't going to work with a quick pee. Finally when there was nothing else left, I gave it a chance; and I was given the opportunity to explore a whole other form of existence, the life of a person with Dissociative Identity Disorder (D.I.D; formerly Multiple Personality Disorder – i.e. "Sybil"). It's harsh and terrifying and beautiful and fascinating… And when it's presented in the form of a comic, it's almost something I can relate to. We talked to the creators, Madison Clell (alias) and her friend Kim Hecht (who helps with some text and production work). Of course I was initially worried if the transcriber would know who – of the many people theoretically present – was talking…

I got Madison alone outside on the patio. Lorraine was convinced Kim was just a figment of Madison's many personalities, and I began to wonder when Kim wasn't there with us. Madison assured me she was coming. She seemed nervous. Though once her friend did arrive, her whole demeanor changed; she was light, relieved, and ready to talk. Just to be sure, I started off with Kim.

Darby: So who is Kim?
Kim: Madison and I've been friends for a long time. I did a bunch of publishing stuff years ago.
What kind of publishing stuff?
K: I used to do a magazine called *Static.* I actually know some people you know, *Bunnyhop* people. I went to school with them. Seth's reprinted some of my old stuff.
I just read his *Cuckoo* review on the way here. It was very descriptive of the general plot synopsis.
Madison: He also said there's twelve personalities. To do that, he must have counted every single face he saw in the whole thing.
So you've been friends since age thirteen?
M: Seventh grade.
K: We were forced to go to an all-girl school with uniforms and rules about wearing socks with lines on them.
What, were you gangsters or something?
M: No, there were no gangs. Maybe people who did drugs, but no gangs. It was all nice, upper middle class girls.
K: It was just an authority thing. They were big on authority there.
Did that influence you in any way?
M: I fled after the first year and went to public school and that saved me.
K: I lasted two years, then left and went to a succession of schools.
How did you end up staying friends?
M: We were the lowest on the totem pole socially in the entire school, and that's not an exaggeration, so

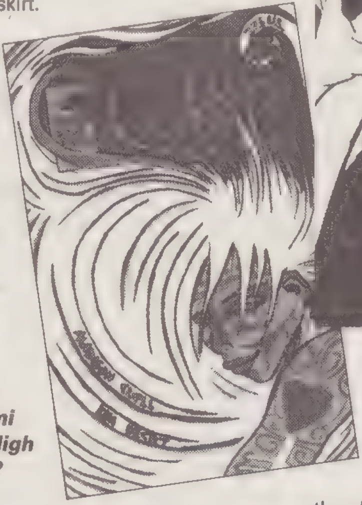


we kind of bonded on that.

K: And we had similar interests. We both liked to read. Fairly non-social. We both liked to draw. She took it to a higher level. We made up living characters out of everything, like Limburger cheese. We took eyeballs and stuck arms and legs on them. You didn't have to wait until you were twenty-five to draw animate food objects.

M: I remember she had the stick-figure Pi, for the mathematical symbol. She had Pi Man! He wandered around in the bane of your mathematical existence.

K: And the uniforms had these little folds in them, like that little sailor flap in back, and that kind of foldy skirt. We'd draw in the creases and stuff. We always wondered who ended up with those clothes.



You would draw secret messages in the folds?

K: We actually got busted for doing that once, "Stop drawing on your friends in class!"

Did you see *Romi and Michelle's High School Reunion*?

M: No.

K: I would really liked to have seen that.

You should. The two girls are the low-totem-pole best friends. It's cute, but it doesn't hide the tragedies of it.

K: That's good, high school *is* pretty harsh.

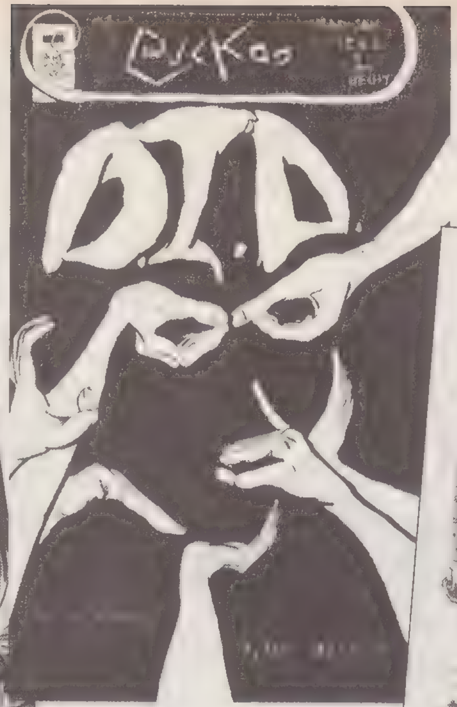
So who *is* Madison?

M: That's an interesting question in this case.

K: A human being. Sitting here at this table.

Just tell me a little bit about... Like who's involved in making this? In your case, obviously, since your personality is so dissected, maybe start with who is "Madison" and branch off from there.

M: I guess Madison's a student, especially a conglomeration of parts that agreed on a name. I mean, things aren't quite so separate as it seems from the comic book description. There's more co-consciousness. Everything I write in these books is about two years previous. I'm much more advanced – I'm not so split up as I used to be. It's safer that way, too. I have time to think about things. It feels safer to write about things that are older, that I have more distance from. Actually, my legal name is different. When I first found out I had this multiple personality thing, it took me totally by surprise. And these parts would come out and say "This is my name, and this *my* name." My legal name was just the name of this one part, if that makes any sense. And so, there's this long period of time when I was trying to think up a name that everyone could use. That was a healthy thing. So we used two letters from each name – it just got longer and longer, trying to arranged it in different orders and it just didn't work. Finally, we started working on this comic book and thought we had to have a name. I couldn't use my legal name for



reasons of self-protection, my family and all that. Also, all the parts working on this together "Madison" is family. Parts of the name Madison sound like names of other parts, like Max and Mary and other things. So, there's general agreement. And the "Clell" is just a combination of my legal middle and last name. And actually having a pseudonym has been the best thing. It sounds hokey, but it brings a lot of the parts together. But it was a big fight for the longest time.

Is there one part of you that's stronger?

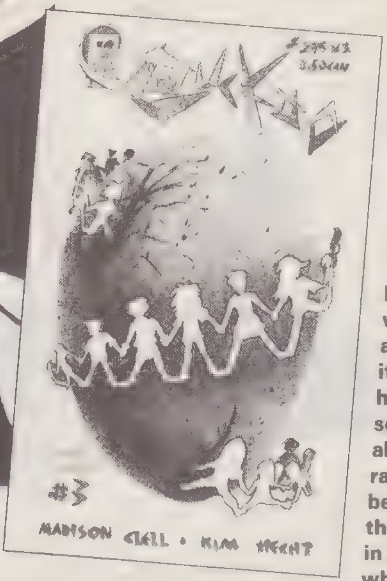
M: If there was, it would be Max. His was one personality that was going to definitely be in the first name, who definitely was going to have more of a say. It hasn't happened lately, but when I was working on really heavy stuff, a part would come out and get more known. It would be really adamant about "I'm an individual and we're going to use my name and I don't care!" Max would come out and say, "I want people to call me Max, and I want to get e-mail!" I'm like, no! It's really embarrassing. That's the most extreme.

it hasn't happened lately, but when I was working on really heavy stuff, a part would come out and get more known. It would be really adamant about "I'm an individual and we're going to use my name and I don't care!" Max would come out and say, "I want people to call me Max, and I want to get e-mail!"

I just want to add something that's important. I don't want to come across as some kind of freak in talking about this whole thing. It's not as freaky as it seems to be, it's fine to talk about parts and things. It's not even as freaky as I draw it. But if I talk about it and draw it as it really is all the time, it would be so boring. It would be like, "Oh I was depressed for three months... I went to therapy every day." That's what it's really like. [Laughs] So put that in there! She doesn't lead the glamorous lifestyle that you were thinking! There's this one story in Issue Four that's the most extreme. It's about this urge to murder people and stuff. Don't you ever feel like killing people? <pause> [Laughs]

Every time I walk through the convention center!

M: I'm a hypocrite, because on the one hand my whole soapbox is like, "This is normal and a lot of people have it and we're not complete freaks." But the only way to draw people in is to bring out the most interesting stuff.



You were saying that a couple years ago it was more separate then?

M: Yeah, you pull it all together and it kind of condenses more.

I don't know very much about this. But it seems almost healthy for someone to see all these separate parts and be able to utilize them. Especially in situations when one part of you can't deal with a situation, why not have another part of you deal with it?

M: I think the association does work like that, but it's not controlled. It just happens, especially in the beginning when I was being triggered by things – and by "beginning" I mean when I first found out what was going on.

How old were you then?

M: Twenty-one. I was really lucky I found out and was diagnosed that young. Although I still don't know... the diagnosis is another story. You never believe it. I could just be walking down the street, and for some reason my eyes would just unfocus and clouds would be pulsing. I just wouldn't be there any more. I would just be "gone." And a lot of times... I don't think I lost time so much as I was not in control. Watching myself doing these things and saying these things. Someone else would be controlling it. Now as things get more together, it's a matter of finding out who these parts are and...

And why you have them?

M: And what the issues are and what the memories are. Just getting to know these parts.

You were saying something in your comic about Layla and how she stopped at fifteen. Do all the characters have an age where something traumatic happened and

that's when they began their existence? Or each time something else traumatic happens, another character is actually born out of that incident?

M: It's pretty much exactly like that. Some of them... there's one part that started really young and kept going, and then stopped at twenty. And then there's one that started at seven and ended at nine. Or not ended, but stopped in time at that age.

Layla, you were saying, is now seventeen, so she ended up growing a little after.

M: Yeah, afterwards she did. I think now at this point in time, it's more integrated, more together, but I keep knocking on wood. "Integration" is like this magical thing, and I don't even know how it works. I'm always afraid that though things are together, one day I'll wake up and find out that they're not.

You were saying you didn't have control at the beginning, but now you can say, "I want Max to come out right now." Or you could say, "This is dangerous, Crystal, you should take care of the situation and just be here right now. It's dark out and we're walking down an alley and I'm scared."

WHEN OUR WHOLE WORLD IS SCREAMING, SOMETIMES IT'S MELANIE.

M: At this point, some parts can come out and take control, but let's say the dark alley scenario... that could be a trigger in and of itself which might bring out Crystal. Sometimes when I'm in therapy they might say, "Can I speak to so and so," and then we'll try to get them out. Sometimes they will. It's sort of up to the part when they want to come out or not. I can't say, "Okay, appear!" I've tried that, and it doesn't work!

When you're doing the interpretation of it in the comic, is that actually them? You were saying these incidents with the dramatic switches don't happen now, but when you're drawing and all of a sudden there's another handwriting, is that actually...

M: That's exactly how it happens. It sounds totally crazy, but I literally hear voices in my head saying, "Put this down!" Actually, when I started this book, I thought it was just going to be me the adult person writing it. That caused such an uproar. Now it's turned out to have every part working on it, so when it switches in the book, it's switching in real life.

The visual interpretation of that is definitely beautiful. I love the way it looks.

K: That's what everybody really looks like, right? I mean, you told me once that whenever somebody starts coming out, you know exactly how they look, from their knees to their fingernails.

M: I've been in therapy for a year and a half and there are all these parts that came out. I could definitely feel with the younger part, I'd feel my body squinching up and shrinking. If I went into a two-year-old part, after I came out, my back would be aching. Then one day I thought, "I'll just try to draw these parts." I didn't really think anything of it, and I just started drawing them. And this sounds kind of hokey, but I could hear them, it was the most magical thing. I heard exactly how each part should look, down to every single detail. "Do the nose this way, now change it... This is how the knees are and I'm this tall... This is my hair. This is what I like to wear." And it was like this for every single part. And I had no idea it would be that way. It was like, "Oh my god! My pen is moving by itself!" [Laughs]

I didn't know I was going to publish it. It just kind of snowballed. I have this one notebook that has an individual picture of most of the parts. That was done before I even started working on Issue One.

K: You do them pretty fast.

M: Quarterly.

I was going to ask about the popping. In dreaming or out of body experiences, it's really similar to the way you described it, where you dream your energy body. Once it happened to me. I was asleep and I woke up and there it was – this fuzzy me coming out while I was still lying down. I got freaked because all of a sudden I was sitting up when I *knew* I was lying down asleep. With my fear over this realization, suddenly I popped back into myself and it was like the two me's merging together. I felt a loud pop in my ears and was completely awake. I wanted you to explain your experience with the popping.

M: For me, it's not like that. But the projection thing, that's totally right on. You're sitting over here, and there's your body over there. But the popping is when there's a rapid switch. And that's when I'm there or a part's there, then they're not. They call it radio head. All of a sudden I'd hear this click, like somebody turned on a radio in my head. It's so loud, it actually hurts my ears. I know it's not coming from the outside. But I'm not creating it. It's just like all this noise.

K: Is it voices or music?

M: It's usually voices and jumbled... It's only happened twice. It's the scariest thing. I think it's just parts talking. I hear voices that I know are in my head, but you know how when you talk to yourself and you answer yourself? In my head I can think of a question and there's an answer that comes, and it's not me, it's somebody else talking. I know it's not the tree talking to me or anything. It's *not* me, but it's *in* me.

It's not the kind of thing you want to tell people about. Like, a good example of the voice thing, not the radio head thing is, I took painting... This is before I knew about any of this D.I.D. stuff. And in these painting classes, I could be working on a painting. I could hear this voice. It was somebody else's voice. They would give me specific instructions like "put down the brush, pick up this brush. Take this exact amount of paint." I figured out that every time I did what the voice said, it would fix the painting. I wish this part would happen more often. Maybe it watched those painting shows. But then the teacher would walk by and say, "Ohhh... I'm glad you fixed the background." You can't go, "Oh, well I was just listening to voices in my head!" [Laughs] I have some ancestor who was supposedly a good painter in Germany. My joke was

Madison with some of the kids
SOMETIMES I WONDER.

that maybe he just reincarnated in my head or something. But I honestly didn't know what it was. And I didn't spend much time thinking about it, because it was just too weird.

Did you ever get scared? As if something was trying to take you over? What are the different things you thought it was?

M: I wasn't scared of that voice because it was so useful! But I was scared having the radio head at Kim's house. I was asleep on the couch. There was this click in my head. I wanted to hold my ears and shut it off. And I started seeing things. And I wasn't asleep. I wasn't totally awake, but my eyes were open. If anyone came walking in, I could actually feel the weight of the person walking in the room. And somebody is like standing over you with a knife... and here all this noise is going on, and Kim's door's open and the TV going on... it was totally terrifying. I thought, "Oh my god, I'm schizophrenic!" That's what schizophrenics do, they hallucinate. And then it just ended. And I looked around the room and there's nobody there and Kim's door was closed and the TV wasn't going on. And I was up the rest of the night totally freaked out.

That sounds bad. Have you heard a lot of bad ones?

K: Half and half. I've heard some pretty bad stuff, but a lot of times we don't talk about it, because I figure by the time she gets to my house, she's been drawing and she's sick of talking about it. If she feels like it, it's cool, but if not, why worry about it? It's kind of dark to have to deal with it on a day to day basis.

I was going to ask about the foreign languages. ***(In parts of the comic Madison suddenly talks sexy to her boyfriend in Italian – a language she does not know)***

M: Oh, god!

You think, okay, all those things I learned throughout my whole life, where did they go? I mean, you must remember everything in some capacity. There's also another side, the collective consciousness of the world. If a lot of people around you know things, you can just sense it. Information comes in your head, and you know you never learned it. Maybe you slept on the right book or something, but a whole other language is very... you had to catch that somewhere.

K: I think the Italian got caught because her father went on a business trip and we were invited along. We were in Monte Carlo for like three days.

M: That's France, but there were a lot of languages being spoken. And for five weeks in a summer school there was a 'learning Italian week'. I think a lot of the Italian spoken... A lot of it's fake, but a lot of it's true; we would look up the words. I also spoke Spanish and they wouldn't even sound like Spanish words I consciously knew.

K: So, do you think the character kind of used a conglomeration of stuff, like things that they picked up to build an identity around?

M: I think so. I think... sex is like the scariest thing for a lot of parts. And so I think my brain was like... you know, just went over to another country. (laughs) Picked up this language. The reason why the Italian is the first story is that it was funny then and it's still funny now. It wasn't traumatic. It was just bizarre.

So, when you were friends with her this whole time, you didn't know there was something...

K: No. I really didn't.

M: I didn't either.

That's weird.

K: It's strange. but it explained a lot because of particular things she was sensitive to, that she was uncomfortable with – like the way she acted towards other people. And she's always been very imaginative. Like she had a ghost picnic on her ceiling. I always remember that. And there was a road and stuff up there. And there was always twice as many places to go in her head as there are for most of us, it didn't surprise me to find out that she had the capacity to deal with something like this and repress... you become very imaginative. Not that I think it's in your imagination, that's not what I'm saying.

M: I lived at home until I went to college and had the safety of not being in that area where bad stuff happened. Even though bad things were over, being in the area can remind you of things. Let's put it this way, if somebody attacks you under one of these blue umbrella tables, the next time you came back here, you would see these blue umbrella tables and you'd be like, shit, I do not want to be here! Basically, the frustrations were reactions to unbearable memory. Things that you literally cannot consciously remember because you'll really go crazy. And I think you can't afford to be reminded of them, until you're strong enough and far enough away. Staying in the same area that has so many reminders is disassociating so you can forget about it as a safety mechanism. So I didn't know about it or start working on how to stop until I was away from the scene of the crime. That isn't to say that my whole childhood was shitty. It was a mixture of all sorts of things.

I wanted to ask about some of the other interesting scenarios, like the different characters getting drunk. Not characters...

M: Actually, pronouns and names are difficult. Because parts doesn't sound right... Peoples...

You wrote how everyone's like, "I want a root beer!"

M: It really did happen, too.

You get drunk differently? The youngsters will get...

M: I don't drink liquor anyway, but still, I can drink a beer, maybe feel lighter, but in that case there were kid parts that wanted root beer and I wanted a beer. That was a mistake. I normally wouldn't get so drunk off of that much beer. I drank this small amount and was just buzzed off my butt. I learned my lesson: You have to be careful when you drink.

K: We should tell her about the food party where they all had to eat their favorite food. I've been with her to the grocery store and there's big fights over who gets to eat what.

M: Oh, god, that's going to be in an issue sometime. Going to a grocery store, different parts eat completely different foods. You go to the check-out stand, and we've got sharp jack cheese and tofu cheese, the milk and the soy milk, and then veggie burgers...

So it's kind of like grocery shopping for every phase of eating habit you have. As a kid, I would be getting Lucky Charms. As a teenager I'd be getting my Grape Nuts. As an adult...

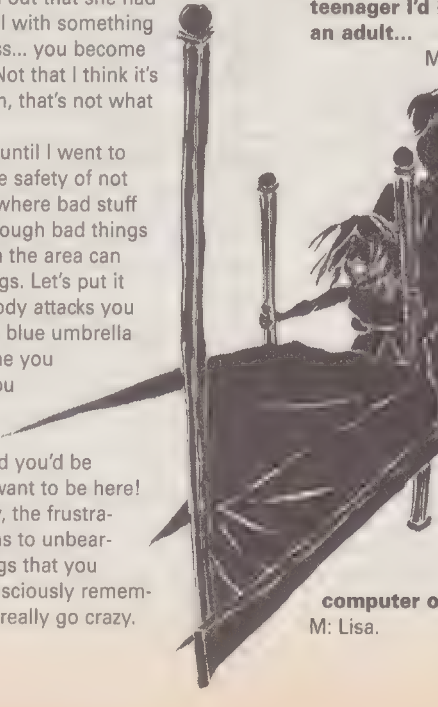
M: I think when you look at it, there's probably an inkling of every eating disorder, but when you combine it to one, it evens out.

Do different people have different problems with eating? Is there a bulimic character?

M: No bulimia. I think there's one part that's anorexic. But then another part comes in and says "No, you can't do that." So this part can be anorexic for half an hour. Then that part will come in... they just kind of cancel each other out. Then I'll eat a salad.

I like the... who's the computer one?

M: Lisa.



feaTures NEW and PrevioUsly UnReleaseD tracks FroM...

AssOrtEd JeLly bEanS

BaD BraInS

B.U.G.S.
(featuring: ArmanDo PradO[1,000 mona lisas], Eric Melvin [NOFX], Kelli Scott [Failure]

DFL

ElecTriC DoG houSe
feaTuring: Joe Strummer [The ClaSh], Seggs [ChemiCal BrOtherS] Chaz, RaT ScaBieS [The DamneD]

FetIsH

GooD rIddAncE

GreeN DaY

LaGwAgon

Me FiRst and ThE GimmE GiMMes
featuring: SpikE [Al&AL], BillIe JoE [GreeN DaY] DannY Vapid [SchReeChINg WeaSel], Ron WeltNer [THe oFFspriNG]

Mr. T eXperieNce

PaNsy DiviSioN with t'Re CooL

PeNNywiSe

ReD AuNtS with eXeNe CeRveNkovA

SwaMp DoG DoeS MooN DoG

The JohN DoE ThiNg

ThE VandAls

X-mEmbeRS

GENERATIONS I IS THE FIRST IN A SERIES OF FOUR CD'S THAT HONOR PAST AND PRESENT HUMAN RIGHTS LEADERS. THE FIRST PROJECT SALUTES ELEANOR ROOSEVELT AND HER EFFORTS IN CHAMPIONING THE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THE SERIES WILL RAISE FUNDS AND AWARENESS FOR THE ACTIONS CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, WHICH WAS FOUNDED BY JACK HEALEY (THE FORMER DIRECTOR OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL)

THERE CAN BE NO LESSER PERSON, NOT ONE!

ARK21

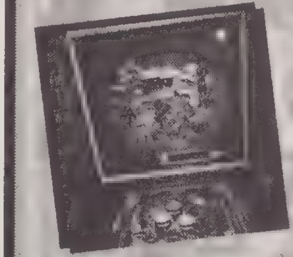
Executive Producer:
Jason Rothberg

© 1997 ARK 21 D2-10000 http://www.ark21.com

Gimmie Gimmie Pop Treatment!

Ridel High

HI • SCORES

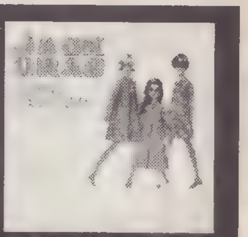


DEBUT ALBUM
OUT NOW!

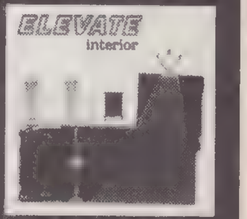
POSTAGE PAID • CANADIAN ORDERS PLEASE
ADD $1 PER ITEM, INTERNATIONAL $2

CD $10 My Records LP $8

ORDER DIRECTLY FROM
MY RECORDS P.O. BOX 170280 SAN FRANCISCO CA 94117 USA



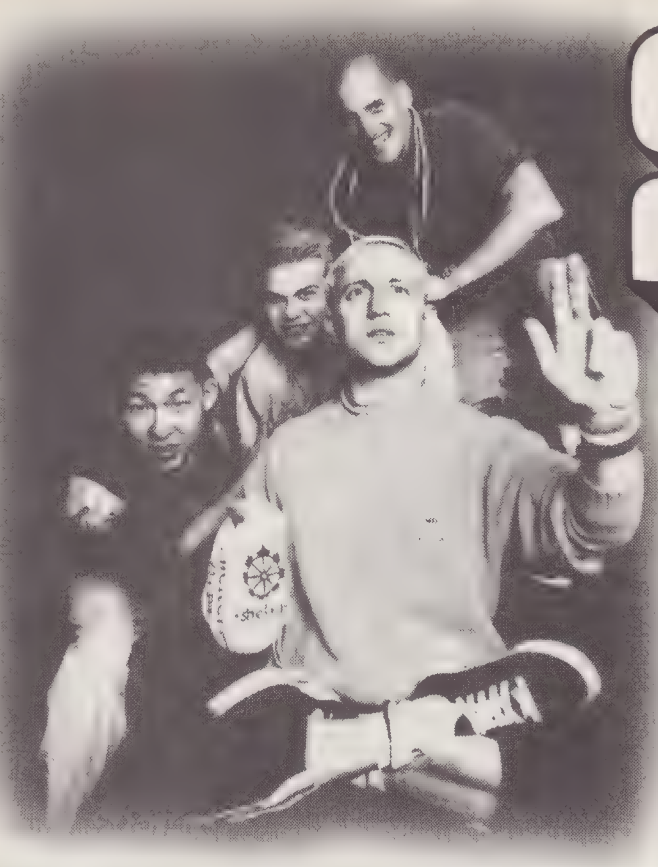
JACK DRAG
"UNISEX HEADWAVE" CD



ELEVATE
"INTERIOR" EP

COMING SOON:
TWO DOLLAR PISTOLS
"ON DOWN THE TRACK" CD
FABRIC "WOOLLY MAMMOTH" CD

CD-$10. EP-$7. POSTPAID. SEND CHECK OR MONEY ORDER TO: HEP-CAT RECORDS PO BOX 17022 CHAPEL HILL, NC 27516
SEND SASE FOR FREE CATALOG.
HTTP://HEP-CAT.COM



SHELTER

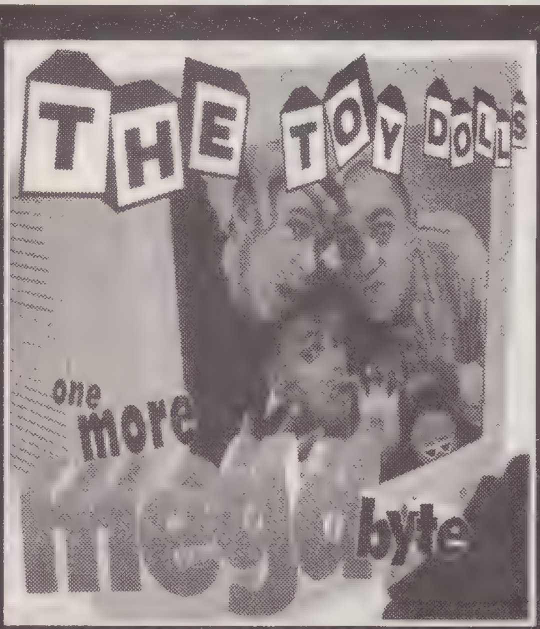
Beyond Planet Earth

NEW ALBUM IN STORES

For current tour dates and
music sample go to:
www.shelter.net & www.roadrun.com

ROADRUNNER supersoul

© 1997 Roadrunner Records



THE TOY DOLLS - ONE MORE MEGA BYTE

New Record and New Songs. Their Best Release Yet!
Fun Punk From England.

Also Available

D.R.I. - Dirty Rotten LP - 2088
D.R.I. - Dealing With It - 2091
D.R.I. - Crossover - 2092
D.R.I. - Definition - 2093
D.R.I. - Live - 2096
D.R.I. - Full Speed Ahead - 2099
Acid Bath - When The Kite String Pops - 2095
Acid Bath - Paegan Terrorism Tactics - 3000

Video Taped Live At
The Ritz, N.Y.C
6/27/87 "Crossover" Tour.
Includes All D.R.I.
Promo Video Clips

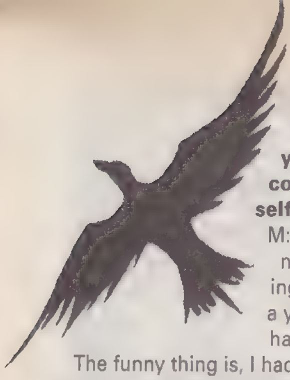
Rotten Mail Order

CD's $13. Tapes $9. Video $14.
PPD. U.S.A./Foreign Add $2.
Each Item
Check / Cash / Money Orders
USA Funds

DAMAGED - TOKEN REMEDIES RESEARCH

The Most Extreme Band from Australia...
or anywhere else! Hate-Core from down under.
Produced By Spike Cassidy
Damaged - Australian For Rock N' Roll

Rotten Records, P.O. Box 2157, Montclair, CA 91763 USA
Ph. (909) 624-2332 • FAX. (909) 624-2392
E-Mail: rotten@rottenrecords.com
web: http://www.rottenrecords.com
Distributed in US by Caroline & Smash! and in Canada by St. Clair



Those diagrams are amazing. Out of control. Do you know about computers yourself?

M: I know a little more now, because I'm trying to buy one. This is a young part, so I haven't researched it.

The funny thing is, I had a roommate who told me, it seems like the logic part of your head got left behind. I got this basic computer magazine before I drew this, and that's where we got some of these simplistic diagrams. This part, she was reading, and all of a sudden it just made sense. And it never made sense before. So this part really knows science stuff.

That analogy is great.

M: In doing this, I didn't think of that analogy. I didn't know this. I wouldn't have thought of that. But there it is.

I always compare the hard drive to the brain. And they say the way a computer saves things on a daily basis, it remembers pieces of information and wherever there's room, it will store the information. Every month or so, you're supposed to reformat your hard drive. It'll take the groups that are part of the same files and stick them together. So your machine will run better. I always refer to having not reformatting my hard drive, because there're pieces I have to grab from here and there, and it's all fragmented and nothing goes in a straight line – it's all separated. I always think of that, my brain reference to computers.

K: Something that always bugged the shit out of me: She would not study for tests. She'd say, "No matter what I do, I get the same grade on a test." You were always incredibly fast finishing, because some of the other people in you were working on a lot of it at the same time. She's like, I don't do anything, I don't know what's going on. You have no idea.

M: This is an epic problem, specifically in math classes, since high school. I knew something was wrong with me.

K: It went to a level I've never seen with anybody else.

M: Because I would study for a test, and whatever I'd specifically study for, I would forget. I know the different kinds of forgetting. Like in Spanish class, I could go in and I'd see a word and think, "What does this word mean?" And blank out. But you'd know it, it's right there! But with this thing, I'd study. Let's say I'd study a specific word problem for the test. I'd go in to the test – I could even do this five minutes before class – and the exact same question would be on the test, and I would have no clue. It's hard to explain, but it would just feel different in my head. And I literally did worse if I studied than if I didn't study. The teacher is like, "Well, this a hard subject, you just need to work harder, you should ask more questions in class." Anything I heard in class, I'd remember most of it, but anything that was outside of class, it's like that information got transferred to another part or something, and it would be completely inaccessible. In a nutshell, me and tests were completely incompatible. The one consistent thing every single teacher said was, "You're so inconsistent!" All those vocab tests in English, I'd get an A one week and an F the next week. Absolutely drastic. My SAT scores were just miles apart. I never knew how it was going to turn out. Thank god I'm out of school.

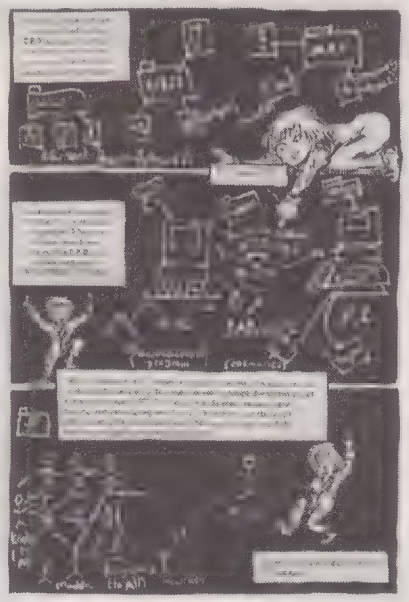
Too bad you couldn't have gone to one of those schools that don't give tests. I like the visual of your therapist with the bag over her head. She knows about the comic and is supportive but doesn't want to be represented? Or is that what you decided.?

M: I decided I don't want to represent her. It seemed like the "professional" thing to do." It's kind of fun to draw bags on people's heads. Privacy. I have to say that so many people think that me and Kim are the same person. Let me go on the record now, this is not the case.

K: I'm real, you see me. I exist.

In court, I will be a witness.

M: People come up to me and they say, "Oh, so you and Kim are the same person," and laugh and are all snide about it.



What is it you do besides be a wonderful friend and support?

K: What do I actually do for the book? Well, that's debatable. Now, mostly what I do is handle distributors going, "This is wonderful, you should really read it." And then calling them back and asking "Did you read it?" I write the inside front covers, all that inside front text stuff. Layout the book review page.

M: I want to add that I like Kim to be the face, the public person who talks to people in person. Because it was completely terrifying to be out. Completely terrifying. But I'm getting better about it now.

K: Originally, I went to stores before she got more confident about it. Kind of allowed her to ease in. And then editing. And I go get the tax forms.

When did you finally say to the world, "Okay, I'm D.I.D."?

M: This is the biggest gesture. It's still in the closet. The one thing is I don't like to go up to people and say, hey, I have this issue... But at the same time, I think people should know about it. With every issue... I just sort of inadvertently come out to more people. Like, the first issue I had to talk to the printers, then they knew. And they could recognize my face. And as issues hit more stores or more people buy it...

So, it would be great if it wasn't... some big social issue?

M: Yeah.

Well, I think you help recreate that. Must be weird, talking about these personal things, instead of having so many witnesses, it's gone through a filter via this paper and makes it a lot easier for someone like me to start to understand about you and not be so judgmental. Because this is entertainment. And I understand the words on the paper and the pretty pictures; it turns the whole thing into something beyond this harsh reality.

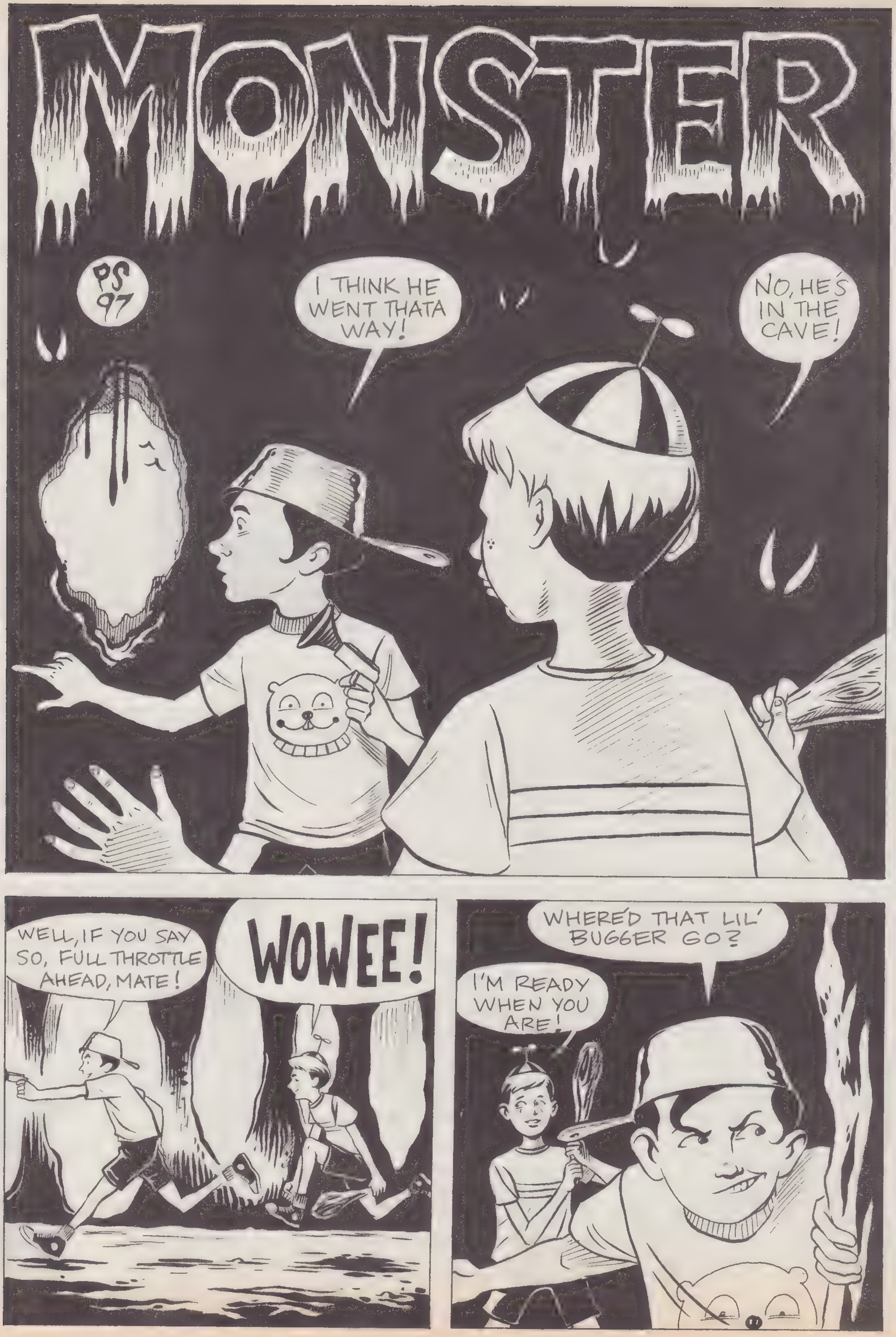
M: I mean, you write about rape or something, and it's hard to even have a one-on-one talk with someone about it. It's being referenced within this. You're able to change it in your head, too. Like when I write it out, sometimes it becomes something different from you personally. It can be really freaky and scary and it can also be the most important thing to get it really out. I guess I write whatever we feel ready to write. We're not going to sit there and beat ourselves over the head, like we have to tell this traumatic story now. I'm reliving things that suck. But if writing about a traumatic story will do some good for us personally... It's really cathartic to churn them out. And it does help release emotions. I guess I'm being kind of vague; I usually end up sobbing at some point, throwing things across the room.

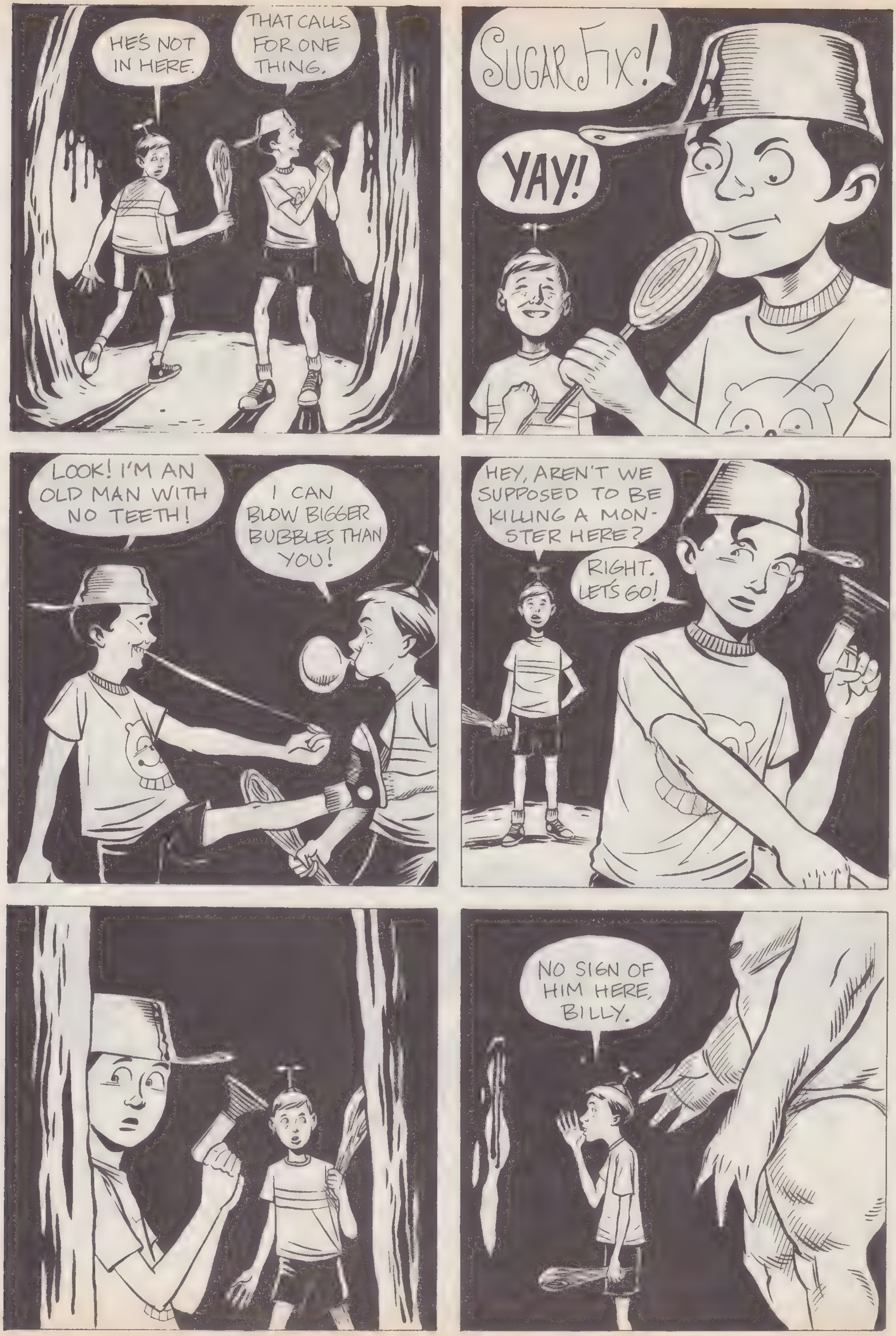
Is there an ultimate goal for you, in this? Do you want to come together even more so you can finally say, I'm one whole person; or do you like the way things are now?

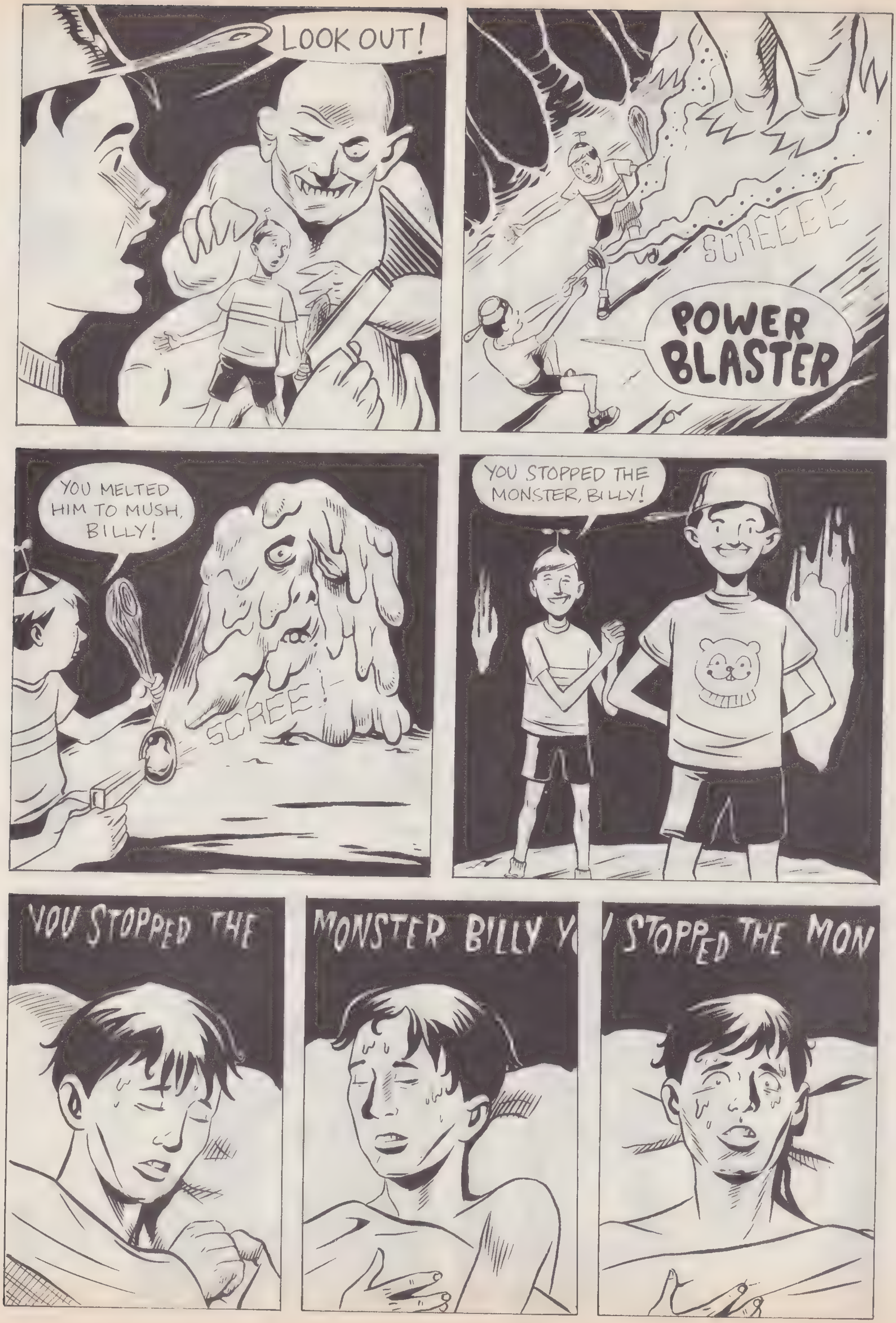
M: Personal goal is just... a happy life, I guess. Integration is a mysterious thing, and I don't really know how it happens, but it seems to be happening. I'd just like all the parts resolved. I used to say I'd like to be buckled-up like a normal person! [Laughs] It's one of those touchy things. I feel like I'm getting more normal, but then when I'm in a bad mood, it's like, oh shit... I'm not as crazy as I used to be... As for the comic book, I used to get on a soapbox. It really is personal, I don't expect to make any money. I think the more people who read about this issue, and child abuse, the whole thing, the better. It'd be great to earn a living doing this, it would be really wonderful. And I would love to bring people together. We've been getting a lot of letters. We're starting to get more letters from people with multiples. It's such an isolating thing. I mean, people really feel alone. I guess as many people as possible reading this would be nice.

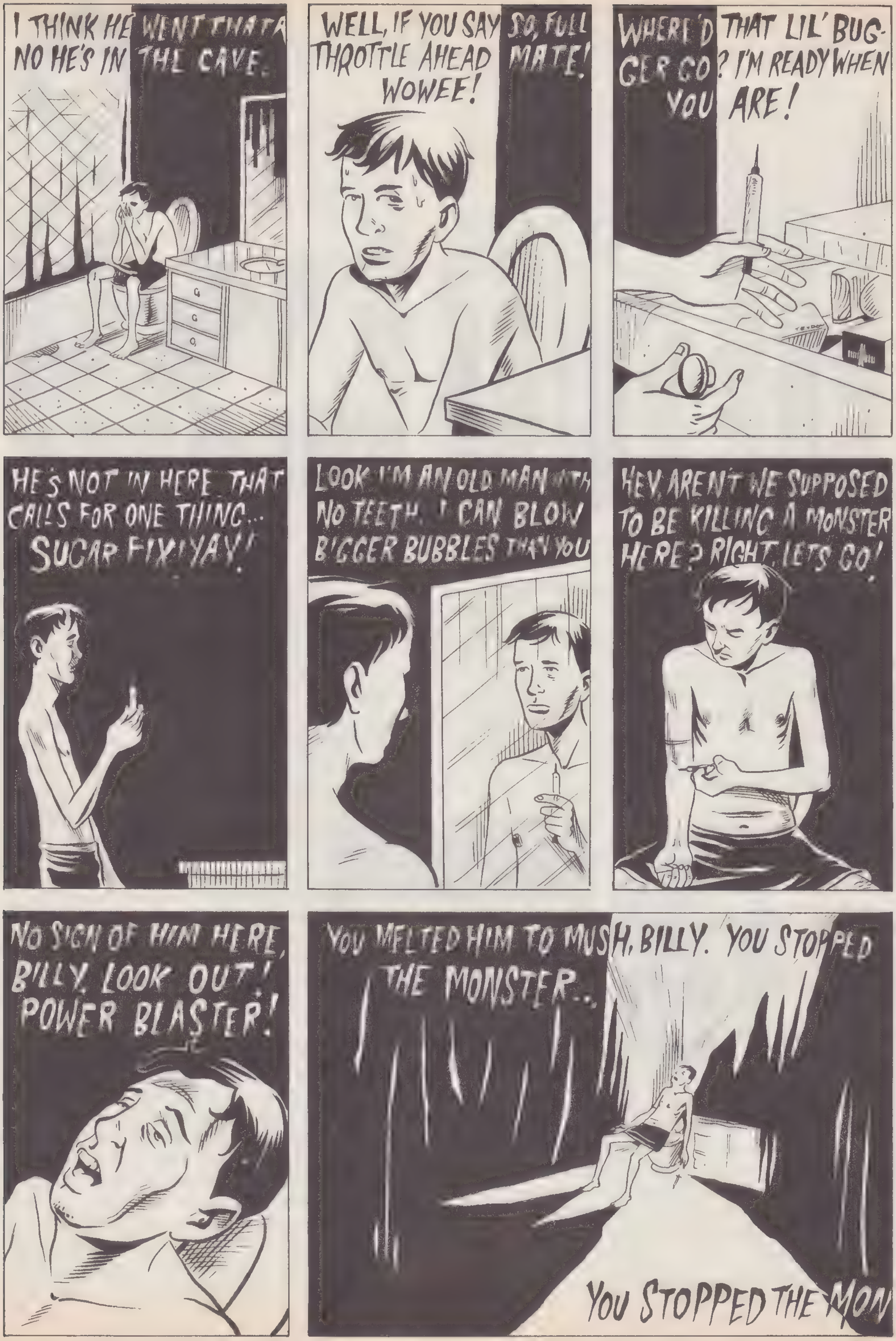
K: I'd like to see it collected as a book and have it accessible to people who have D.I.D. – we all have our little hell we go through. Any time anyone expresses themselves like this, I think it could be really relieving to read it.

Ask for Cuckoo in your smarter comic book venue, or write PO Box 12150, Eugene, OR 97440, e-mail Green Door Studios: madclell@teleport.com.


MONSTER
PS 97
I THINK HE WENT THATA WAY!
NO, HE'S IN THE CAVE!
WELL, IF YOU SAY SO, FULL THROTTLE AHEAD, MATE!
WOWEE!
WHERE'D THAT LIL' BUGGER GO?
I'M READY WHEN YOU ARE!

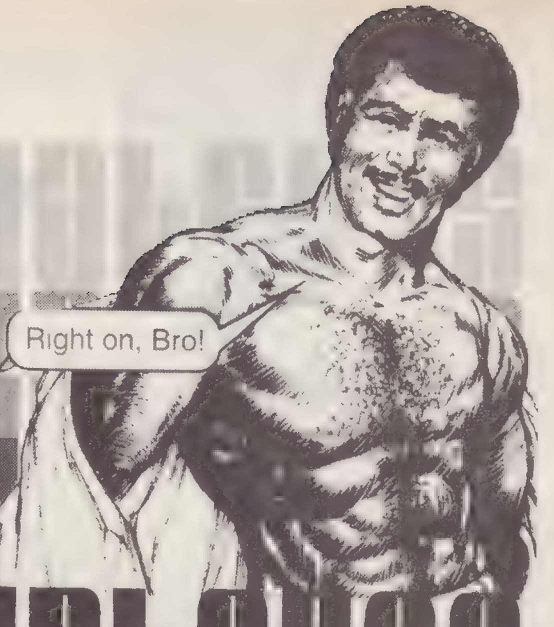

HE'S NOT IN HERE.
THAT CALLS FOR ONE THING.
SUGAR FIX!
YAY!
LOOK! I'M AN OLD MAN WITH NO TEETH!
I CAN BLOW BIGGER BUBBLES THAN YOU!
HEY, AREN'T WE SUPPOSED TO BE KILLING A MONSTER HERE?
RIGHT. LET'S GO!
NO SIGN OF HIM HERE, BILLY.


LOOK OUT!
SCREEEEE
POWER BLASTER
YOU MELTED HIM TO MUSH, BILLY!
SCREEE!
YOU STOPPED THE MONSTER, BILLY!
YOU STOPPED THE
MONSTER BILLY YO
U STOPPED THE MON


I THINK HE WENT THAT
NO HE'S IN THE CAVE.
WELL, IF YOU SAY SO, FULL THROTTLE AHEAD MATE! WOWEE!
WHERE'D THAT LIL' BUGGER GO? I'M READY WHEN YOU ARE!
HE'S NOT IN HERE. THAT CALLS FOR ONE THING... SUGAR FIX! YAY!
LOOK I'M AN OLD MAN WITH NO TEETH. I CAN BLOW BIGGER BUBBLES THAN YOU
HEY, AREN'T WE SUPPOSED TO BE KILLING A MONSTER HERE? RIGHT, LET'S GO!
NO SIGN OF HIM HERE, BILLY. LOOK OUT! POWER BLASTER!
YOU MELTED HIM TO MUSH, BILLY. YOU STOPPED THE MONSTER..
YOU STOPPED THE MON

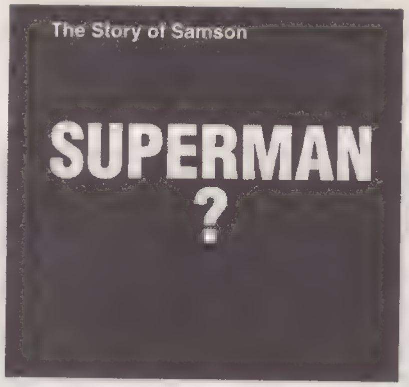
END

the chick hatches


Right on, Bro!

by Dan Raeburn

In his self-promotional tract, *Who Me?*, fire-and-brimstone Christian cartoonist Jack T. Chick tells how he came to be in this world. By telling the story of his artistic genesis, Chick has, like most self-made men, authored his own creation myth. In it, a missionary returns from China to Chino, California, to tell a young Chick (whose face is hidden from us), just exactly how Mao managed to convert the world's most populous nation to Godless communism. "They stole the technique from us!" the missionary explains, his anglo-saxon features bathed in light. He tells a story of Chinese spies who observed American children engrossed for hours by comic books with titles like *Scream* and *Evil*. Impressed, the spies sent word of the irresistible nature of this art to their scheming superiors in Beijing. "At the cost of millions of dollars, communist propaganda in the form of cartoons were printed to influence the Asiatics," states the narration, beneath a drawing of suddenly wide-eyed Chinese children reading the comics handed them by a grim soldier. "I guess communism has *all* the answers!" one child concludes. "This must be true!" exclaims her friend. Hearing of this cartoon *coup d'état*, Chick was enlightened. The germ of his career was this: if comics could be used to win souls to the devil, they could also be used to win souls to Christ – and to capitalism. Chick was going to fight the devil with the devil's very own weapon.



Initially finding willing subjects only among the incarcerated, Chick began drawing out his vision of cartoon damnation on a flip chart for prisoners. "With their attention riveted to the drawings," Chick trumpets, "nine of the eleven present accepted Christ." Swollen nearly to tumescence by the success of his pen, Chick printed this vision in an tiny, yet ambitious little booklet entitled *This Was Your Life!* The seed of his underground comix empire was sown. Thirty-eight years later, *This Was Your Life!* has sold over 60 million copies. Over 400 million Chick comic tracts have been distributed around the globe, in over 70 languages, making Jack T. Chick perhaps the most widely-read theologian in human history.

It's the fact that Chick's nightmares are *cartoons* that makes them so damn disturbing – and effective. As children, our trust in cartoons allows the flaming sword of Chick's consciousness to cut us that much more deeply; as adults, our defenses are actually *lowered* by the mistaken notion that we've outgrown the children's medium of comics. Chick makes no secret of his awareness of this subversive power. He proclaims his thesis at the beginning of his product catalog: "Nobody can resist cartoons," Jack thunders like a modern Moses atop his Sinai: "*Nobody!*"

I'm proof that he's right. When I was eleven my mother brought home a stack of used comic books from her job at Goodwill Industries. Among the Archies and Charltons were two 32-page comics from Jack T. Chick's Crusaders series: *Operation Bucharest* and *Chaos*. The warning on each cover lauded, *Recommended reading for adults and teens.*

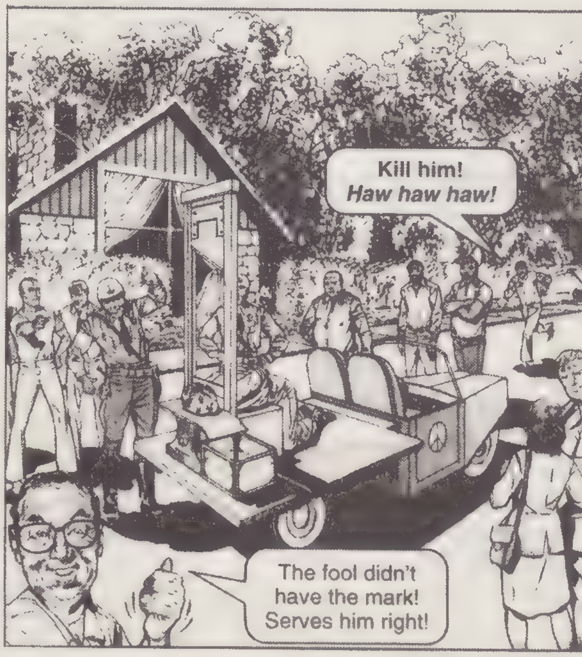
The Crusaders, Jim and Tim, weren't particularly interesting heroes. They were a black and white duo in a lurid, four-color world – a chaste yin and yang who smuggled microfilm bibles behind the Iron Curtain and wooed Sofia, a sexy Soviet spy, to become a bride of Jesus. Chick did his best to imbue the bible-beating nuts with the well-muscled homo-eroticism common to all manly pairs, and as a result Jim and Tim were as boring as all other perfect creations. It wasn't the Christians who converted me to Christianity.

It was the villains – more specifically, the depiction of the villains. The Crusaders series was written by Chick, of course, but illustrated with grotesque gusto by Fred Carter, the unsung genius of Chickdom. The pure evil emanating from the folds of Soviet Colonel Cherkov's carbuncled, porcine face was downright palpable; Carter's trademark striations etched out bodies so vigorous, so venomous, so *physical* that the message behind the mask seemed undeniable. Carter made Chick's message live. It was the Word made Flesh.

"Yea, hath God said . . . ?"
THE DEVIL TRICKED HER BY QUESTIONING WHAT GOD SAID.

And what that flesh did to other flesh – and to me. Sofia, the aforementioned Soviet agent (called a "swallow" by her uniformed oppressors) looked just right on her knees, in a little red dress, sobbing in perfect submission to The Man above. The KGB agent filming her was moved to join her on the floor, and so was I. Carter's females embodied rapturous delights, especially his Eve, hiding as always barely behind a few tiny leaves. If that's where I came from, I reasoned with Freudian longing, I wanna go *home!* And if sex wasn't enough to make an almost-pubescent animal like myself join the flock, there was always sex's twin, death.

When the actual Rapture hit Chickdom the carnage was spectacular: sterling airline pilots, with eyes as blue as the skies they were called into, left their hysterical passengers in mid-flight to crash all alone into control towers, everyone screaming "@%#!!!" and "Yaaaah!" Imagine every single bumper sticker prophecy coming true as suddenly unmanned minivans and Crown Victorias sailed off overpasses and into rows of gasoline pumps, sparks flying and igniting fireball after fireball. Those left alive lived out The Tribulation (as the seven-year period following The Rapture was called) under the rule of the Beast, plague, and famine. Children's bellies distended from starvation while golf-cart-like guillotine-mobiles beheaded men and women in the street – all performed under the rubric of the peace sign, of course.


Kill him! Haw haw haw!
The fool didn't have the mark! Serves him right!

Then Russia invaded Israel, sparking World War III. The war consummated itself in a thermonuclear holocaust that exterminated one-quarter of the earth's population, followed immediately by the Battle of Armageddon, a battle that climaxed with soldiers, their horses, and their peace sign flags consumed by a steaming, bloody sea of fire and brimstone, one soldier in the dead center disemboweled by the white-hot light of God. "Jesus takes control of this planet and sets up his government in Jerusalem," Chick concluded. "He will reign for one thousand years." Jesus Christ: the ultimate badass. Tim beamed at me from the back cover. "It's later than you think!" he said, "Russia could move at any time!"

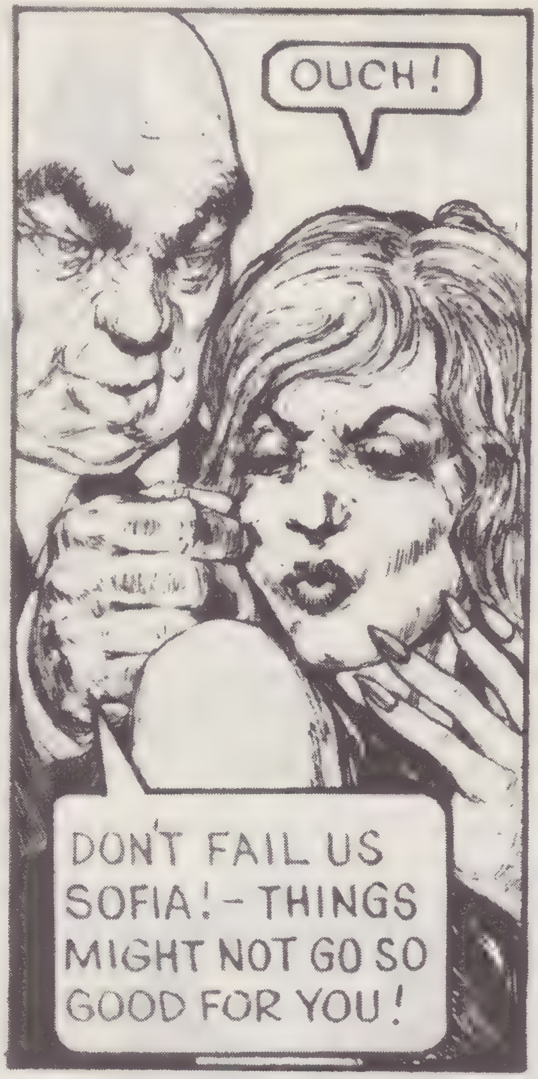
It was 1980 and Ronald Wilson Reagan had just been elected President of the United States under the premise that he would kick commie ass. I put two and two together (or six and six and six together) and resolved to get in good with Christ. I really did. Fortunately, the guy was nowhere to be found that summer and I saw no evidence whatsoever of his existence in Junior High either. I soon forgot all about Him, (until I moved to East Texas – but that's another story).

Now, over fifteen years later, I cherish my Chick; I even have a Chick-list to keep track of my tracts – engaging in the kind of pathetic, anal-retentive wankery specialized in by the morons who read comics like *Beta-Boys* and *Zed-Men*. Chick is the only artist in my collection afforded this kind of deified treatment. To what do I attribute this perverse love of Chick? I may hate the messenger and his message, but – like the Israelite mistaking the golden calf for the ineffable Yahweh – I cherish Chick's creations with a passion bordering on devotion.

And I'm not alone in this devotion, nor in my comix-sparked conversion to the Chick-Christ. There are two opposing sites on the World Wide Web devoted to Chick. The official Chick site is Chick's own creation: it's filled with chirpy testimony to the effectiveness of his little cartoon tracts (along with a whole lot of stuff for sale, natch). The *unofficial* Jack T. Chick site is the creation of one of Chick's detractors, an enigma known only as V-X. Although it's the work of Chick's critics, it too is filled with testimony to the effectiveness of his little cartoons. While the official Chick site has its own pleasures (particularly the "Chickwear" section, featuring Chick comix t-shirts modeled by blonde chicks), V-X's site is the darker and weightier of the two. It's filled with letters from fellow "chicklets," those who are religious in their opposition to Chick.

For example, this chicklet's story: "My mom used to make me and my siblings read Jack Chick tracts when we were kids. As a kid, it's horrifying to see the illustrations in his tracts – especially when your Mom is telling you that it's all true." Of course, according to the laws of emotional logic, Mom's and Chick's plan backfired: "Needless to say," the chicklet continues, "I spent many years trying to sort all this bullshit out and now I'm an atheist and give money to groups like Freedom From Religion." As Chick sows, so does he reap: he may make you hate yourself, but you'll eventually hate him in return.

But beyond this tooth-for-a-tooth retribution there's an ambiguity to our hatred of Chick. Just as Chick relishes hating evil in order to love his Savior, we love to hate Chick. One writer to V-X's site, a former member of a Christian group that "based its theology and social views upon much of the information in Mr. Chick's tracts," spent her teens passing out Chick tracts at school, work, and in public. "I spent my entire youth living in fear and hatred of anything that did not revolve around Christianity. I even participated in a burning of Care Bear toys," she admits. "Their little heart symbols supposedly represented the energy chakras some Eastern faiths believe in and were therefore satanic." And what did our correspondent do when she eventually escaped this cult? She marked the occasion by burning her entire collection of Chick publications. That was her second mistake. "Now I regret this," she sighs. When we're *with* Chick, he's a horror; when we're against him, he's a delight.


OUCH!
DON'T FAIL US SOFIA! - THINGS MIGHT NOT GO SO GOOD FOR YOU!

In fact, we seem to *want* reminders of our childhood foolishness and terror. Another chicklet recalls attending a parade when he was twelve and seeing a real live clown for the first time. The clown roller-skated right up to the wee lad, leaned down into his round face, and inquired: "Do you know the Bible, son?" Getting no answer, the clown intoned: "If you don't, you're going to Hell." He handed the dumbfounded boy a Chick tract and skated away. The boy grew up hating clowns – yet collecting Chick comix.

This paradox can perhaps be partly explained by what cartoonist Daniel Clowes, in his recent manifesto *Modern Cartoonist*, calls the "fetish-value" of comics. "Even (and especially) in their most debased form," Clowes argues, "Comics have an aura to them of unspoken truth." This unspoken truth is the expression of human conflicts and traumas in mythic and symbolic terms, and it's particularly effective in Chick's already highly symbolic realm of religion – virgin birth, sacrifice and rebirth coinciding with vernal equinox, etc. This "unspoken truth" is also akin to my most childlike wonderment, comics being (for those of us born in the pre-digital era, anyway) one of the earliest, most unfettered artistic experiences of our lives.

Chick's comics express my most childlike fantasy – perfect love from an immortal parent – at the same time that they provide a tangible, nostalgic link to that childhood: comic books. I laugh at the folly of my youth as I reread and relive it through Chick. This ironic appreciation is often derided as kitsch, but it's a much-needed salve if your vulnerable soul was lanced like mine by Chick's comix. Clowes himself (a super-cynical, half-Jewish, atheist cartoonist) admitted in a recent interview that, once upon a time, even he got nailed by Chick's comix.

"I'm so glad I didn't read the full-length Jack Chick comics when I was little," Dan began. "They might've *really* fucked me up." As it turns out, his experience with the smaller, black-and-white tracts was harrowing enough. Dan recalled a "really bad weekend" when he was in art school: his Brooklyn apartment had no gas and no electricity – in the winter. "For some reason," he said, "I went into a Christian bookstore. They had a spinner rack with all the Jack Chick comics for eight cents each. So I bought sixty of them, five dollars worth, a stack which is still the core of my collection." When he arrived back at his dark apartment, Clowes bundled for warmth and read all sixty tracts in a row, by flashlight. "It was too much for me," he stressed. "I was really convinced that I was fucked. I thought, okay, he's *proven* his point. I'd never been absolutely convinced by a comic book before in my life, but I was sure that he was right, and that I'd been crazy all along. I was in the right frame of mind, and to read that many in a row, this overwhelming tidal wave of Christianity coming at you – it's an amazing experience."

Dan's conversion lasted only a couple of hours – probably until the lights came back on – and he went on in life to create the all-time greatest Chick parody, "Devil Doll?", in the first issue of his comic book, *Eightball*. Essential to any parody is *mimicry*, an appreciation which, however ironic, is still faithful and sincere at some basic level. Our sincerity is an honest response to Chick's sincerity; horribly misguided as he may be, Chick means what he says, and he says things that have meaning. We chicklets respond to that: "Here was this comic dealing with life and death," Clowes said. Chick "was pulling out all the stops, there was no soft-pedaling, he was just ramming it down your throat. Never before had I been affected like that by comics."

That's why Jack Chick is an artist, and why his comics are comix. We have to believe Chick, in a sense, if only long enough to fully rebuke him; he and his frightful integrity force us to decide between right and wrong, so that even when we side against him, he is still responsible for our righteousness. Or maybe we just get sucked in by all that sex and violence.

Daniel Raeburn is the editor of The Imp, *from which his interview with Clowes was recycled in order to milk maximum exposure from his tenuous connection to the famous cartoonist.*

Chick Publications' web site can be found at (http://chick.com). The Unofficial Jack T. Chick Archive can be found at: (http://www.ungh.com/vx/chick)

All artwork featured is ©Jack T. Chick.

NEW RELEASES!!!

CLOWNS for PROGRESS
unreleased tracks
white vinyl 7" $4

22 JACKS / MESS
split 7"
unreleased tracks from both bands
green vinyl $4

FIREWORKS
NEW ALBUM "Lit Up" featuring
unreleased and rare tracks
full length CD $12

RIOT SQUAD
"boots, beer, studs,
& spikes"
new full length
CD $12

LAST BEAT
RECORDS
2819 Commerce
Dallas, TX 75226
800.201.2328
www.lastbeatrecords.com

THE GAIN

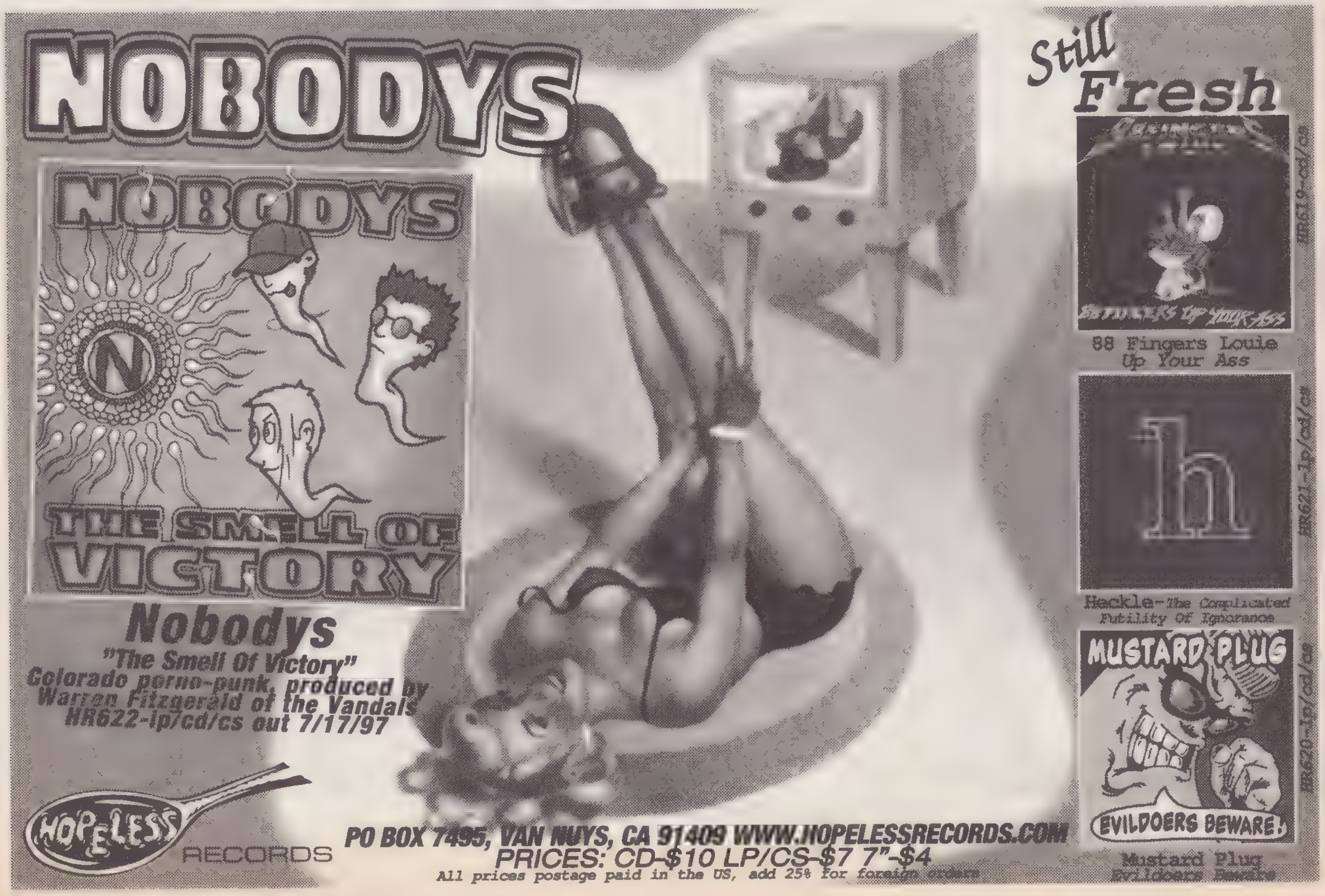
THE DEBUT ALBUM
SINGREADYSTEADYSMASH
GATEFOLD LP&CD OUTNOW ON MIGHTY

LP $9.00, CD $11.00 (PPD)
(Money Orders or Cash Only, No Personal Checks)

MIGHTY

P.O.Bx. 1833, Los Angeles, Calif. 90078
mighty@wavenet.com / 213.851.5557
Distribution: Cargo, Caroline, Dutch East,
Revolver, Subterranean, Lumberjack, Rhetoric
1000 Flowers, Detour U.K. & Munster

© 1997 Mighty Recording Corp.



NOBODYS

Still
Fresh

88 Fingers Louie
Up Your Ass

Heckle-The Complicated
Futility Of Ignorance

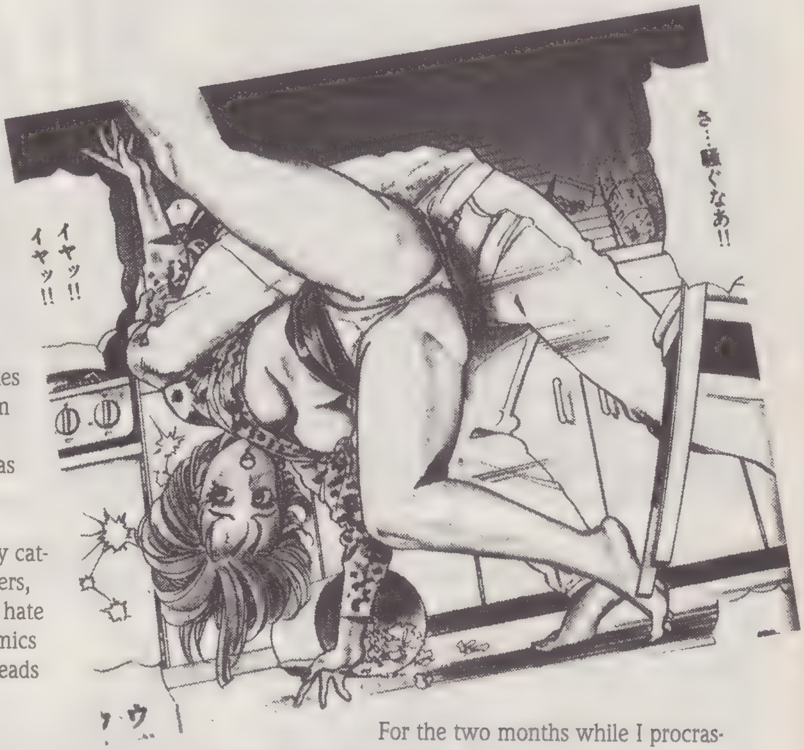
Mustard Plug
Evildoers Beware

Nobodys
"The Smell Of Victory"
Colorado porno-punk, produced by
Warren Fitzgerald of the Vandals
HR622-lp/cd/cs out 7/17/97

HOPELESS RECORDS
PO BOX 7495, VAN NUYS, CA 91409 WWW.HOPELESSRECORDS.COM
PRICES: CD-$10 LP/CS-$7 7"-$4
All prices postage paid in the US, add 25% for foreign orders

girlz + comix japanese

by leyna marika p.


さ…騒ぐなあ!!
イヤッ!! イヤッ!!
アウ…

When I think of comics, I think Japan. Comics are everywhere in Japan, it's a part of everyday life. It's like eating rice or watching TV, but better. It's not a hobby or a 'collectable', rather it's a part of Japan itself, like how sushi is a part of Japan. When riding the subway or busses, there are people of all ages and sizes reading comics. People stop in bookstores on their way home from school and work to read them.

Even if one is not an avid comics reader, there are some form of comics in almost every major magazine. Rather than specialized comic book stores, every bookstore has a comic section that takes up at least 20% of the shelf space. There are comics everywhere from the school library to ramen noodle shops. If you go to the doctor's office, there are comics there instead of *Newsweek*. By the time I was in third grade, I learned about love, betrayal, sex, World War II, and Helen Keller, all from comics.

There are comics for everybody in Japan, there are so many categories to choose from. There are comics for kids, girls, boys, teenagers, ladies, men, housewives, businessmen, emperors, and much more. I hate to categorize, because I know plenty of grandmas who read kids' comics and women who read men's comics, but the stereotypes as to who reads what hold a lot of truth.

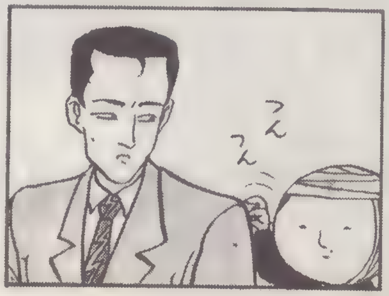
For the two months while I procrastinated writing this article, I've been thinking about how it all starts. How do comics start to play a part in a Japanese person's everyday life? For me it started in the dentist's office waiting room. I was a frequent visitor, and there were rows and rows of comics on the shelf with the safest, most comforting elevator music playing in the background. Being the television, allowance, and snack deprived child that I was, comics became my favorite distraction from life. I used to go to the dentist an hour before my appointment just to read comics, but I know it didn't start like that for everyone.

I've thought long and hard, and this is my conclusion: television. Most kids start off reading comics at an early age because of TV. As soon as they become literate, they start reading the comic book versions of the cartoons they love. For me it was the opposite: I read comics so I could catch up with TV. Whichever starts first, comics and television split off and the young chipper reader discovers that comics have a world and culture all their own. What's interesting is that in Japan, one's life journey with comics differs widely according to their sex.

In elementary school, kids buy these two-inch thick, newsprint bi-monthly comics which are different for boys and girls. They usually consist of about fifteen different 'to be continued' stories that include paper toys. The girls' comics are stories about princesses, love, and jealousy – pretty innocent entertainment. I used to read my neighbor's old issues – always a month behind. I don't know what the boys' comics were

young
4月号
250円
内藤イサオ
あなただけに
春をアゲ
CATCH!!
岡田純子
つつみ

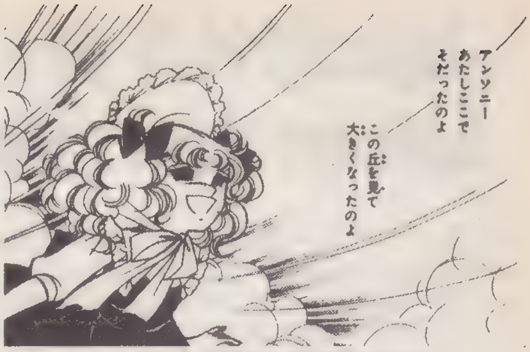
Cover of a Ladies Comics Magazine



(sound of poking)

Here's a paradox: haiku, a Japanese poetry form in which the writer is allowed only seventeen syllabels, is thought of as Fine Art, about, maybe soccer champions or something.

When I was in sixth grade, I found the comic that changed my life. It was a story spanning four years of a teenage girl's destructive existence. At the time, it blew my mind. It delivered to me what no comics had done before. The confusion and emotion portrayed in the story is full-blown teenagerism. The girl lived with her widowed mom and met a boy in a motorcycle gang (which is what rebellious kids in Japan did ten years ago), ran away, confused (Who was my real father? Why is my boyfriend weird?), angry (Why is my mom dating that dweeb?), and then detailed her difficult relationship with this boy as it changes over time (he eventually gets in an accident and is paralyzed). It was four years of conflicts, realizations, and insight. I know it doesn't sound too exciting, but this comic was amazing to me. The author, Taku Izumi, was so good at depicting feeling, and everything was so cleverly illustrated that the characters were actually alive (in my little head). I could feel time, weather, fear, and sadness. I've read it over thirty times, and every time it's made me cry real, salty tears. Now I would make fun of or blow it off, but there's no denying how much it moved my twelve-year-old heart.


アンソニー
あたしここでそだったのよ
この丘を見て大きくなったのよ

**thoughts: "Anthony, I was raised here"
I grew up watching these hill.**

ンソニー……
名まえをきくことはできなかったけど……
あなたの知ってる丘の上の王子さまをさがしたい……！
きっと…きっとあえるわよね……

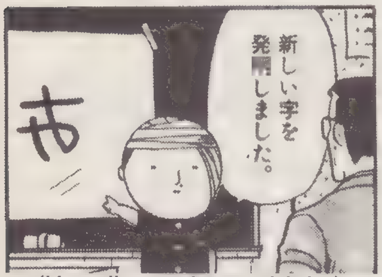
Anthony… I never knew your name but I wasnt to meet the prince on top of the hill. Someday I will meet him

There are tons of these bi-monthlies. Most comic artists start out their careers by having strips published in such compilation magazines. If the artist gains popularity, his/her comic gets published on its own. The story lines geared toward female readers extend from fairly innocent to ones that are a little more intense in content (affairs, sex, suicide, etc.). 'Ladies' comics are mostly illustrated erotica and are read by women of all ages (including some adolescents as I did). These comics also usually have nude photographs of women in the glossy front pages. The rest is elaborate sexual fantasies and stories, written mostly by women. It's interesting that the majority of sex comics readers are women.

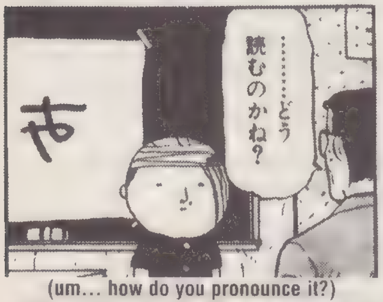
Male readers also have bi-monthly serials read by all age-groups. One comic magazine, *Jump*, was popular in the '80s (still is). I often saw high-school boys and businessmen reading it. Many comics became famous by premiering in *Jump*. The stories vary from funny comics (including pornographic stuff) to political comics, depending on the featured artist, and they are definitely less emotional than women's comics.

There is another magazine like *Jump* simply titled *Magazine*. According to my friend Ai (who lives in Tokyo), it publishes a strip called "GTO" that is sweeping the little island nation off its feet. It's a witty political comic depicting current Japanese pop culture. It received so much attention that the major Tokyo newspaper wrote a big article about it. I am very fond of these off-humored comics that have come out in the last five years. They aren't really mainstream, because the humor is very strange, seemingly pointless, but smart. My favorite is "Utsurun-desu" by Sensha Yoshida. His humor is very strange and leaves a weird aftertaste, and it makes sense on a level I don't quite understand myself.

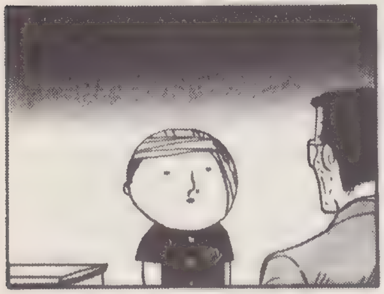
**COMIX BY SENSHA TOSHIDA
excerpt from "Utsurum-Desu"**

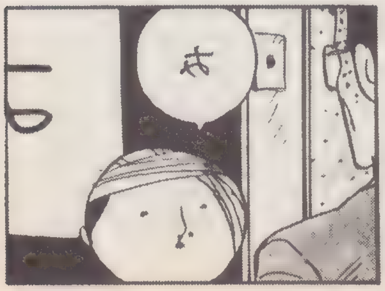

新しい字を発明しました。

(i have discovered a new alphabet)



(um… how do you pronounce it?)

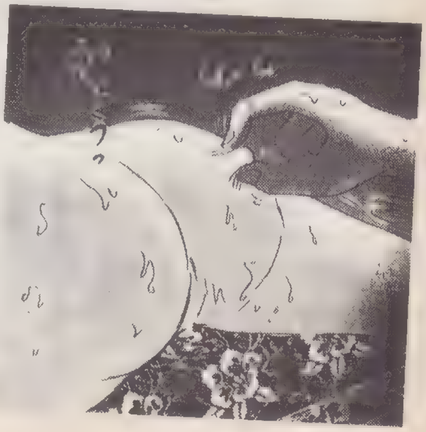




I really wish that all these comics could be translated into other languages. I guess they *could* be, but they would lose so much in the translation. The Japanese language is perfect for comics; there are word/symbols for every sound. With English, it doesn't expand much further than "splash!", "ping!", or "bang!". In Japanese, there are sounds for blinking (fast, slow), breathing (shallow, heavy coughing), puking, sweating, swallowing, light, hair blowing in the wind, a finger picking a nose… the list goes on forever. These vivid sounds can be written, which adds a lot of life to the comics, but makes them impossible to translate.

I don't know why the quality of comics and animation is so good there. Ai says, "As soon as Japanese people find something they're good at, they expand on it and strive their hardest to make something better. America found its outlet in Hollywood, where Japan basically stopped at Godzilla. Though there are good movies out of Japan, animation and comics is our entertainment outlet."

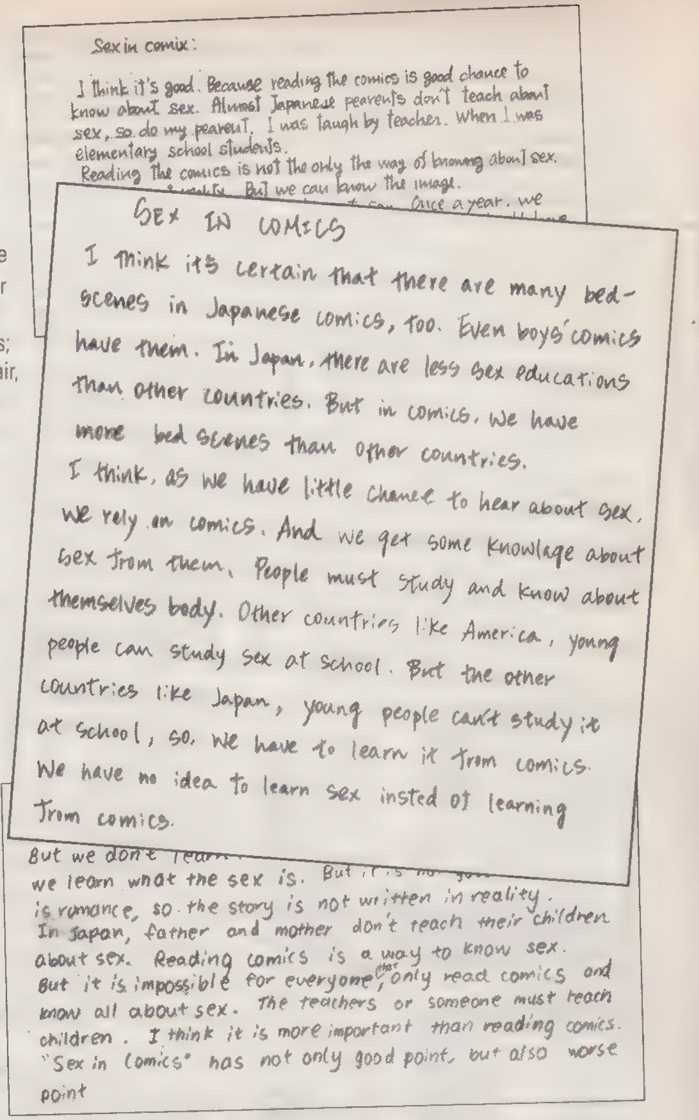
I don't think Japan is with comics like it is with cars, but comics are a comfortable medium for communication that people accept and relate to. It's just like any other art. It feeds people's basic needs, just like a good book would: a little world to slip into every now and then.



but Comics are regarded as intrinsically limited even though it allows for far greater expressive freedom than haiku. –Harvey Pekar

Students in Japan talking Sex Comix

by karen eng.



Sex in comix:

I think it's good. Because reading the comics is good chance to know about sex. Almost Japanese pearents don't teach about sex, so do my pearent. I was taugh by teacher. When I was elementary school students.
Reading the comics is not the only the way of knowing about sex.
rectly. But we can know the image.
t can. Once a year, we

SEX IN COMICS

I think its certain that there are many bed-scenes in Japanese comics, too. Even boys' comics have them. In Japan, there are less sex educations than other countries. But in comics, we have more bed scenes than other countries.
I think, as we have little chance to hear about sex, we rely on comics. And we get some knowlage about sex from them. People must study and know about themselves body. Other countries like America, young people can study sex at school. But the other countries like Japan, young people can't study it at school, so, we have to learn it from comics. We have no idea to learn sex insted of learning from comics.

But we don't lear
we learn what the sex is. But it is
is romance, so the story is not written in reality.
In Japan, father and mother don't teach their children about sex. Reading comics is a way to know sex.
But it is impossible for everyone that only read comics and know all about sex. The teachers or someone must teach children. I think it is more important than reading comics.
"Sex in Comics" has not only good point, but also worse point

How does a culture that is so apparently repressed manage to make adult sex comics such a huge genre? And how does this same culture seem to look the other way when it comes to sex in children's comics? The schoolgirl in a sailor suit figures prominently in Japanese sex comics, and the exact same graphic style is employed in kids' comics; only the explicitness of the sex portrayed is relative. Porn is illegal in some forms – pubic hair, touching genitals, etc. – but in when depicted in comics and blacked out photographs it is allowed. This Lolitaesque portrayal developed partly because showing nude adult women is illegal: an "art" movement sidestepping repression. This is a culture where men can buy schoolgirls' panties from vending machines – while schoolgirls are simultaneously denied sex education. At the other extreme, students are now reportedly selling their services to clients whose tastes may or may not have been whetted by such comics. Or could it be the students themselves who have finally decided to disregard the line between fantasy and reality? Who knows? If I were a Japanese schoolgirl, I couldn't imagine what sex in comics might do to how I perceive myself sexually – in an environment where shame is an equal and opposite force to desire, where I'd so often be caught in the middle.

Wondering about this, I wrote to an ex who teaches at a high school in Japan, asked him about sex in Japanese comics and begged him to send me a few copies of whatever he could find. He wondered whether I just wanted them for the pictures, because he knows my Japanese is no good. But through the course of our conversation, he agreed to ask to his students (as an extra-credit English assignment) about their opinions of sex in comics. The following sampling of letters are from girls all about seventeen years old, young enough to remember children's comics, and old enough to have seen adult sex comics, and to be interested. A packet full of torn-out notebook paper (excellently smooth, heavy Asian stationary) appeared in my mailbox in a plain brown envelope. Each sheet bore the heading "Sex in Comics." Here's what they said:

I always read many comics. In those comics, sometimes sex seen in the comics. I think it is good. First, if we read like that comics, we can know what sex is and we can know how to sex. To know about sex is very important for us. Second, when we become parent, our children will have to ask me "Why did I born on?" We are very shy, so we can't answer it. But comics teach them the question and they can know about correct sex. So, I think sex in comics is good.

I didn't think about SEX many times. But I didn't think that SEX is dirty or strange. So if SEX is in the magazine, I don't think so. Then SEX is important thing, I think. Because it is one of the important actions. For example, it is love action of lovers or it is very important for making the baby. It does not mean of strange. It's important thing for women very very very much! Because the women just only make a baby with men. And if we want to bequeath a descendant. Newly the women don't make a baby in Japan, so a baby isn't born than several years ago. So it is more important thinks than many years ago. So we must really think. I think.

I don't feel so bad that there are sex scene in comics. If there are no sex scene in comics, maybe I don't feel so interesting. There are a few sex scene that we can read comics with our heart beating in excitement, I think. But there is a limit to everything and if caricatures publish sex scene in comics, they have to draw with having right knowledge. Otherwise we are badly influenced by comics and we will have wrong knowledge.

In Japan, there are many sex scenes in comics. I have read such comic book. It was quite sensational for me. I think Japanese high school students are inferior to foreign country students about sex. So many people are interested in sex. And we want to know sex, so we read such comics. Japanese parents are ashamed of sex and don't tell us about venereal disease and contraception. So we learn them from comics and magazines. I think we need such comics.

I'm a sixteen years old girl. I don't think it's dirty, but when I saw the person who was reading a comic with a dirty scene at a coffee shop, I thought it's dirty. So, if you read the comic at your house or a private place, it's OK. I think. Nowadays, I heard that many young women go to buy undies with their boyfriends. So, the old days it was believed to be dirty, but the world is changing very much, I think.

It is natural that we should see sex in magazines or comic books. I think recently not only boys but girls have become more and more interested in sex in Japan. Every book has at least one or two scene connected with sex and we read such books calmly, without being ashamed. However, these days here, there are a lot of women (girls) that dealed in as "thing of sex." Surprising that may school students offer themselves to someone so as to get a large amount of money at a time. To be brief, sex is made to be thought as "goods." Japanese parents don't necessarily teach their children sex. They never because of shame. This may cause the present situation.

I think it's certain that there are many bed-scenes in Japanese comics, too. Even boys' comics have them. In Japan, there are less sex educations than other countries, but in comic, we have more bed scenes than other countries. I think, as we have little chance to hear about sex, we rely on comics. And we get some knowledge about sex from them. People must study and know about themselves body. Other countries like America, young people can study sex at school But the other countries like Japan, young people can't study it at school, so we have to learn it from comics. We have no idea to learn sex instead of learning from comics.

My parents have never said about sex. When I was 10 or 11 years old, I read girls' comics. And I knew to have sex with boys. I wanted to try, because I thought it was interesting. But I never say "I want to have sex with boys." If someone says that we think she is crazy. Comics are only amusement for me. I don't believe most of comics. To have sex is not so easy. But I think those comics are not so good for girls who are 11 or 12 years old.

(thanks to John Connell and participating students of the Maryknoll Girls School, Yokkaichi, Japan)

THE NINETIES: Sex Comics Are Everywhere

By Erick Gilbert

After having introduced Betty Page to a large public in the mid-'70s (and reprinting the cream of Nutrix Productions in its *Bizarre Comics* series), Belier Press ran out of most of its publications in the late '80s. Nuance Publications had published the last ejaculations of EC veteran, Wallace Wood, in the *Gang Bang* series, and occasionally published a new book (*Cajun Casanovas*, 1988). But they disappeared shortly thereafter. Catalan Communications reprinted European material in trade-paperback format free of the labeling requirements. Leyland Publications and the Tom of Finland Foundation covered gay explicit graphics.

While 1986 had brought a lot of attention to the comic medium with the publication of *Maus*, *Batman: The Dark Knight*, and *Watchmen*, celebrating the "coming-of-age of comics as a mature medium," sales did not follow, and some of the young publishers who were deeply involved in the direct market felt the economic pressure. Meanwhile, Undergrounders who had always developed other outlets survived on the sales of their sex titles: Kitchen Sink had *Omaha* and *Bizarre Sex*, Rip Off had *Doll* and *Strips*, Last Gasp had *Cherry*, *Young Lust*, and *Leather Nun*. In the mainstream, Vortex had gained big sales with *Black Kiss*, the first mention of kinky sex in the world of direct-market comics.

And so, in the summer of 1990, around the time of the San Diego Convention, an imprint called Eros appeared. It was widely known that Fantagraphics was the publisher of this new line of erotic comics. Fantagraphics was, at the time, the leader of the "new publishers" who had started in the late-'70s, bringing the editorial and commercial practices pioneered by the Underground to the mainstream of the direct market. Striving for a higher quality of comics, Fantagraphics had developed a critically acclaimed catalog of comics and books by top old and new talents. Unfortunately, high quality was not enough to sell books, prompting the creation of a line of sure sellers: sex comics, which invite a long and convoluted debate having to do with the general mental evolution of this country and its inhabitants.

In 1990, after developments in the comics industry had established the direct-market system of distribution, after the early obscenity bust of Friendly Frank's and the creation of the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, the situation of adult comics was as follows:

All comics have to be labeled to warn anybody coming close to the comic book as to the contents. Some still sport the Comics Code stamp. A few are labeled "Mature Readers," an advisory meaning that the book could contain strong language, possibly nudity and adult situations (not necessarily sexual). These comics could not be sold to very young readers, though teenagers could purchase them according to shopkeepers' discretion. This backfired when a comic book published with the "Mature Reader" imprint by DC comics was sold to a fourteen-year-old.

continued page 47

HOW My Brain swims in a BUCk et of Cartoon cre em

by karen eng

STROKE IT! YEAH! LIKE THAT!
ARE YOU SURE EVERYTHING'S ALRIGHT, SWEETHEART?

Comic Relief, Berkeley, "Adult" section. Customers (all men) creep in surreptitiously and then jump when I ask if I'm in the way. Male comic-shop clerks roll their eyes, female clerks shudder.

I was on a quest to find out, simply, what was out there. Is there life any longer on the planet that produced *Cherry Pop Tart* (the X-rated Archies rip-off/tribute)? What can you get at your basic comic book store or well-lit sex store in the way of a comic – right now – that'll leave you damp at one end and smiling at the other?

Sex sells, so it'd seem that sex-comic artists wouldn't have to try very hard to make something that will please. Still, what's sexy to one person will bore or nauseate the next, so I expected to find a huge range of perspectives and styles and subject matter. I reckoned that the freedom to draw and write whatever the artist fancied would give him or her license to unleash the imagination more ferociously than through photography, writing, or even film – surely comics as a medium for porn would be more interestingly complex because we associate it with childhood, hero worship, fetishizing of women, political commentary.

I was mostly wrong, though. Maybe it's because I'm a woman, but most of what I found in currently available porn comics were only a little better than what I'd be able to find in an adult mag. White male fantasy is white male fantasy, and that involves a very limited range of visual stimuli. As we all know, it's primarily fellatio, "lesbian" sex, and... that's all, actually. Oh, lotsa creem. On the one hand, I found myself often wishing they'd leave something to the imagination, and on the other hand, I wished they'd be more imaginative. Mutually exclusive? Don't think so.

Thinking that perhaps I'd just run into a dry season (the guys at Comic Relief say that print runs can be fairly small, sell out fast, and then are sporadic), I decided to ask at the Cartoon Art Museum in San Francisco. They very kindly sat me down in the research room with a big pile of what they thought were some of the best currently accessible erotic graphic novels and comics.

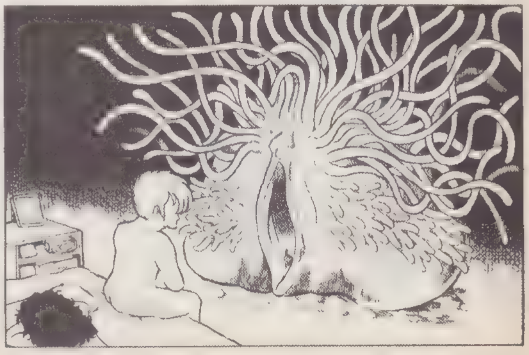
Then, once the word got out that I was doing this, suddenly everyone I knew was pulling their favorite sex comic out of the attic and showing it to me, buying them for me… I even got a tour of Last Gasp in San Francisco, where I raced through a labyrinth of comics following sex-comics guru Erick Gilbert – and I was inundated with more smut than I could climb into bed with.

The following survey barely dents the reams of sex comics there are floating around out there – at Comic Relief there's a bin full of back issues that needs looking into – and despite the bitching, it's not ALL bad. I tried to cover a wide range, but as I'm just one person with a limited amount of time for, um, research, I blazed through huge piles, and what you've got left here is on a scale of stuff worth mentioning for novelty's sake, to pretty darn cool stuff. Some of these are current-issue, some are still in print, and still others might be out of print, but all are worth looking for.

Meatmen Special Gay Comics Sci-Fi Edition Vol. 12 Leyland Publications. Fun gay male anthology with a variety of art and stories slipped over the comic booky spacetravel stuff (I don't care if it's smut, it's still boy stuff to me). My favorites were:

Project: Exodus by Mike. Looks kinda like an illustrated, thin ink drawing version of Fellini's *Satyricon*. In the last days of Earth and the first days in Eden, muscley men in togas with prominent nipples, sweet hunky expressions, and flowers in their hair make love under trees in the meadow and recite poetry as they receive blow jobs (wow!). Then, suddenly, their cyborg brothers arrive via spaceship to try and convince the Earthlings to abandon the planet before the sun explodes and obliterates them all. You see, the Earth's population has been separated into those who got launched into space and perfected themselves through science and those who perfected themselves through natural selection back on Earth. (Without women – suspend your disbelief.) Um, the voluptuous cyborgs wear winged helmets, have winged ankles and capes – and that's all. Their attempts to save their kin are met with pagan Luddism and apathy due to relentless horniness. And in the *Star Wars* theme…

Master of Masters by Sean. A dominance and submission male-bonding love story set in intergalactic space, involving an S&M brotherhood intent on dethroning an evil empire (sound famil-



1 KUUUU (woman snoring) 2 KASHU, KASHU' BESO, BESO! (masturbating sounds)

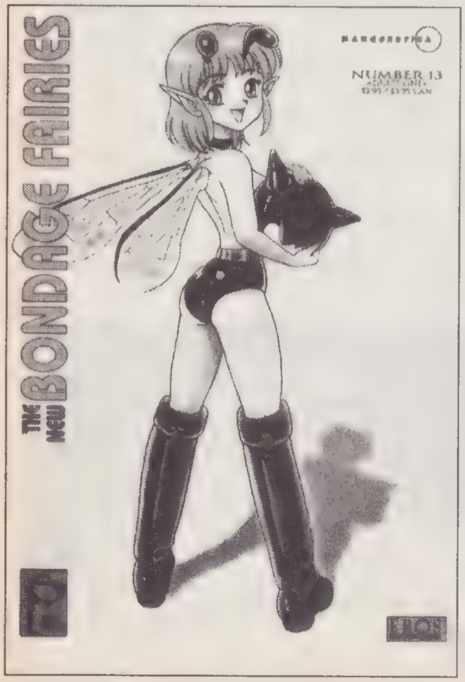
iar?) using mental as well as physical super-futuristic control equipment. The equipment is excellent as well as the clothing, both involving spare leather strappies, and best of all, they all look like versions of Luke and Han. Pretty friendly.

Tom of Finland by Tom of Finland. If you're a girl who likes boys do you find depictions of gay males sex sexy? What about if you're a girl who likes girls? In the book *Manga! Manga!: The World of Japanese Comics* by Frederick L. Schodt, I read that in the '80s, a magazine targeted at senior-high-school girls featured "stories of love between beautiful teenage boys overseas, drawn by women artists." Why? The book quotes the magazine's editor as saying, "Love between boys in another country is so completely distant from their own reality that it's not threatening, yet it still gives them a vicarious experience. They also think it is pretty." I find Tom of Finland's work very pretty indeed. Here's an example: Enormous in every way '70s supermodel types in the park and on the nature trail, cocks out and about, have a lot of firm fun until a policeman show up. You get a little tense that the party might be over but breathe a sigh of relief when he wields his baton – of course he's the biggest of them all. My favorite involves a park bench and a couple of hungry young buckaroos. Makes me want chicken-apple sausage (serving 2-3) – or be a boy, even. Even though TofF flauntingly uses every possible cliché regarding male idolatry of traditional male roles (*I love a man in a uniform, shoop shoop*) and idealized physiques, the characters' apparent machismo is softened by the nuance in their facial expressions, ranging from passion and pain to humor and sweetness. The combinations and situations are usually so absurd, that it takes some of the edge off. Explicit and passionate, but not violent. Jubilant. Silent. No words. TofF is available in variously sized book anthologies.

Eros Comics started a line of erotic comics in book form by celebrated comic artists. Did they do it just for the money? You be the judge. Some are boring, some are good. I couldn't not review:

Birdland by Gilbert Hernandez. The most famous of the famous in this series probably. Whadda relief after all the big boobs to come across Birdland with its heroine BangBang (also the name of an '80s big-hair glammy DuranDuran wannabe pop band), a stripper w/ tits so small she wears a Band-aid over each nipple. She's got the Hernandez mean look. I know there's a story in this somewhere, but darned if I could find it. Frankly, the body parts and juices jumping out of every frame at every turn kinda distract me from what promised to be interesting plot and character-wise in the beginning. Too much explosion; no buildup. Still, funny dialogue, space critters, hipsterfolk soap opera.

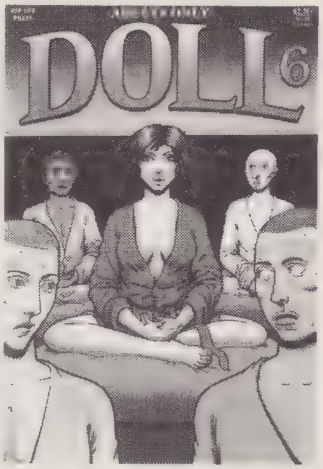
Young Witches by Solano Lopez and Baneiro. Goth feminist fable, goth boy's dream. *Young Witches* takes place in Victorian England, where young illegitimate orphan Lilian Cunnington is sent away to a school where a coven of girls is training to infiltrate the world with the creepy cult of Ishtar. There she finds her "talents" are strong – so strong that she uses her power to transcend the narrow-minded reactionary feminism preached by the school (it helps that she likes boys) and act out of free will and compassion instead. But not without a struggle. Comes complete with a heroine with long straight black hair parted down the middle, a castle with a hedge-labyrinth, and my favorite scene, a classroom demonstration showing how easy it is to control man's will by sucking him off. Achey, painful, romantic, and scary, this story's engrossing and not just for the sex, which is sexy.



Eros also publishes **Mangerotica**, a line of comics produced "in cooperation with award-winning Studio Proteus… [Eros Comix has] cherry-picked [oof] the very best series from some of the top erotic manga publishers in Japan, Penguin Club and hot Milk Comics." This sounds a lot more interesting than it actually is, but if you like manga-style drawing, you should check this out. Eros' line of erotic manga gives us a taste of what a Japanese reader might be brave enough to slip coins into a special vending machine for.

Apparently these comics are redrawn for Eros by the original artists to correct Japanese censorship, which doesn't allow portrayal of pubic hair. But in redrawing American edition manga to fill back in the bits that can't be shown legally in Japan, Eros might be doing us a disservice. Some of the artfulness in avoiding showing pubic hair and genitals/genital contact is lost, returning our focus to what's obvious. Still, the details used to titillate – the close-ups of facial expressions of exhaustion and ecstasy, the peculiar and suggestive angles – all distinguish manga from their raunchier, more obvious Western counterparts.

Bondage Fairies by Kondom. Look, little girls with pointy ears and perky butts and thigh-high boots and upturned boobies and – wings! Pfil and Pamila are fairy sisters who get themselves into amusing little adventures as an excuse to get off on each other and whoever else happens to cross their forest flight paths. A squirrel and his sexually frustrated wife, for instance. Or their maniacal masturbating creator, who appears in the comic as a normal man 'cept he has a condom for a head. Ho hum. Basically nothing happens. Not even much bondage. Those fairies are darn cute though; I would have loved them in a Hello Kitty kind of way when I was a kid. Mostly sad, bad dialogue (maybe it's just the translation, but I don't think so) in silly, sometimes charming situations. The fairy novelty wears off quick, but that doesn't stop it from being a best seller. Maybe it's the super title.



Misty Girl Extreme by Toshiki Yui. Misty goes to visit her friend Misa in Jipeng, the beet-shaped planet (Tom Robbins, anyone?), but Misa's been waylaid by a horny cop. So as he rapes Misa against a tree, Misty, tired of waiting, hires a hoverbike (a flying motorcycle) that has a (carelessly drawn, barely visible) dildo implanted in the seat. She likes it! She cums all over the place and passes out on a leaf, where Misa, wandering in a post-rape haze, finds her. They fuck (I don't remember details), Misty wakes up, Misa passes out, and Misty decides it's time to go home again, no cuddles, no cigarette, no nuthin'. Heartless bitch. This is nowhere near as cute or cleanly drawn as Bondage Fairies, but the thing is, at least these two resemble women. They've even got pubes.

Sexhibition an anthology. I don't remember what volume this is in, but there was a story about a high school girl love triangle where they wind up fisting each other after school, against what I remember as a low wall in a cloister. Ah, high school. Dewy-eyes, jealousy, wearing nothing underneath my uniform skirt (how did they *know*?) and loving it. Cheesy as this whole near-kiddie-porn thing is, there was still something quite romantic about this story: the intense girl-crushes produced a pang of nostalgia in me that made me think this wasn't entirely just to get some boy off.

MAGAZINES THAT SHARE THE SHELVES WITH PORN COMIX:

Kiss Comix anthology. This anthology from Mexico has super mainstream cheese on the outside from the tits down to the plastic cover so you can't get it wet 'til after you buy it. But the stuff inside, while fairly standard fare, seemed well crafted enough to make me want to look again. Sells well.

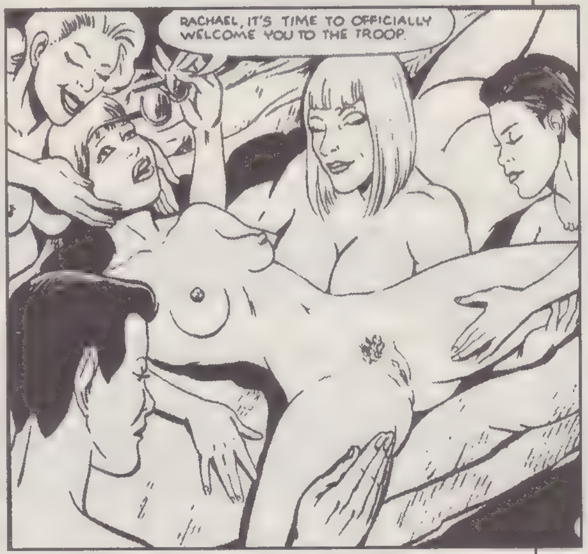
Penthouse comix. I know, I know. But they're out there, and you can get 'em at the liquor store; doesn't that seem significant? I don't know how long they've been publishing these, but it looks like even *Penthouse* is trying to capitalize on the sex-comic boom. The surprising thing: in among the stuff you'd expect (military dyke-babe scenarios, etc.) is work by artists as well known as Milo Manara and Moebius. Manara, at the 7-11. Weird, huh? The thing of it is, and here's the thing of it: it was difficult to find explicit sex comics by women. It was IMPOSSIBLE to find explicit sex comics by lesbians. How come? Underground lesbian comic artist Roberta Gregory says in the *Twisted Sisters* anthology that "I don't want to show het men what lesbians do… Guys that want to see 'lesbians' having sex so they can masturbate to it have plenty of bad examples of comix drawn by het men who think they know what lesbians do." Fair 'nuff. Here are a few drawn by het(ish) women.

Saucy Little Tart by Molly Kiely. Everything about this breezily drawn and written comic reminds me of carefree alternagirl life in LA. Maybe it's the smug smiles of heroine Zelda, her cute lover Zeljko, and her sister, Zasu. Maybe it's Zeljko's goatee? The piercings? The road trip? The Gotta Havva Java Cafe? OK, so I've never bought any of my sex toys at a

Not so fast there, smut peddler! Nobody flashes pictures of dongs at Wonder Wart-Hog and lives! –the Hog of Steel to dirty comix artist "R. Scum", *Zap Comix* hardware store (volume 1 features a buying guide – this one gets my vote for practicality), and I've never hung my lover on a door, blindfolded, and waxed him. And I've never tied up and seduced my sister's girlfriend either. But that doesn't mean I haven't thought about it. It doesn't mean I don't relate. *Saucy Little Tart's* a fairly recent publication. If you hurry you can probably find them all.

Bitch in Heat by Giovanna Casotto. One of Europe's most popular porn comic artists. Between her short narratives setting up the tension and her realistic, pencil-drawing style, Casotto creates classy-looking stuff that retains warmth. Flesh looks full, skin looks shiny, nipples look hard. Even the pears are sexy. Kneecaps, vulvas, hair – the details feel so intimate you can almost smell… well, never mind. Stories in a recent issue includes a rustic scenario involving an invisible stranger, ripe fruit, and a pee outdoors.

The Lost Girls by Melinda Gebbie and Alan Moore. I ran across the first installment of this one in *Taboo*, the now-defunct comics journal. Of every sex comic I looked at, this title was definitely the most unusual in narrative – which was strong, incidentally – and the most artistically mesmerizing. The story draws you in slowly with an image of a mirror, who speaks with a woman in the room it's reflecting. The woman is masturbating, but you don't see that. You see frame after frame showing the mirror and color changes in the room, a bed, a thigh, a silhouette, and the dialogue continues. In the next episode, the woman emerges: her hair is silver and in a bun. The strange story centers around three unlikely women who meet in a hotel at the turn of the century. They tell their stories to one another and become lovers. The artwork is amazingly atmospheric and detailed, and the sex, while not exactly over the top, is sexy. I hunted down what I could of full issues. Only three issues out so far, but I hope there'll be more.


RACHAEL, IT'S TIME TO OFFICIALLY WELCOME YOU TO THE TROOP.

Lonely Nights by Dori Seda. This is one of the titles Erick threw at me. According to Last Gasp, "...Seda was the top woman cartoonist of the 80s." Witty and definitely girl-attitude–oriented, her stories contain uncomfortably realistic characters. Dirty laundry, going to the laundromat, dog envy, orgy @ the women's retreat, and more.

DISTURBING:

Tart! by Howie Dard. Just… terrifying. I suppose it's the horrible waif-creature who looks about 10 years old, but it's not just the tiny nub-breasts (remember when you first start getting them and they hurt?), the big starving pixie eyes to match the so-hungry-she-ought-to-be-covered-with-flies-by-now ribs and hipbones, not even the white lacy ankle socks or the tuft of pubic hair on someone obviously not old enough to have any. What really makes my heart sink is the hanging-down, dripping vulva she keeps rubbing as she gazes at her brother's force-feedback ThrustMaster joystick. Get the picture? It's just so sick you can't stop looking at it. Volume 1 came out in 1994, was apparently wildly popular, sold out, went out of print, and was very hard to find for awhile. Now volumes 1, 2, and 3 are all apparently available through Last Gasp.

Horny Biker Sluts/She-Male Trouble by John Howard. How d'you spell relief? R-A-U-N-C-H. These live up to their great names in all-out explicitness dosed with imagination and wit. Excellent to look at too. Notorious.

Tijuana Bibles edited by Bob Adelman. Those interested in the early sex comics in America might want to find this recently published book. The Tijuana Bibles were originally sold on street corners in the '30s and '40s and often featured movie celebrities of the day such as Little Orphan Annie and Clark Gable in compromising positions. Very cartoony and not very well drawn, these are still a funny and nostalgic peep. Includes historical essays by the editor, so it's an excellent Christmas gift idea for Gramps.

I could go on – but no, actually, I can't. Gotta draw the line somewhere, and I can't look anymore. Not that I never will – if you have a favorite (I'm sure I missed it), let me know at kfeng@igc.apc.org. And to get some, contact Last Gasp at lastgasp@hooked.net or 800/848-1836 and make them send you a catalogue.

Sexy Mexican Comics

by Estefany Fidel

***El Libro Vaqureo*, *Estefanía* (a personal favorite), and *Las Chambeadoras* to name a few, have become the literature of choice for much of the Spanish speaking (male) population in the U.S., as well as topping the reading lists all over Mexico. These pocket-sized comic books were introduced to me while riding on the metro in Mexico City for the first time, where I was amazed at the number of middle-aged men who were so openly enjoying their porno comics. They're not *always* pornography, however. There are many types of these digests: police stories, romances, you name it, but no matter how different in subject matter these little books are, one thing is never missing: big-hipped, meaty-legged, extremely buxom women with waists the size of an average person's neck. These books are considered to be perfect bathroom reading material, and can be found on the back of many a Mexican toilet from where little boys sneak them, attracted by the pictures of beautiful women, which are readily accessible to their porn-hungry little Rite Of Passage hearts. They're available in any liquor store, *carnicería*, or newsstand where Spanish reading material is sold – the hairy, mustached man behind the counter can surely recommend you his favorite editions.**

Sex Comics continued from pg 45

Then there was the "Adults Only" label. There were still fairly few of these titles. They were mostly published by the veteran Underground publishers.

THE CURRENT PLETHORA OF SEX COMICS

The first title, *Birdland*, by Gilbert Hernandez – the current star of the Fantagraphics stable – was followed by a mix of R to XXX-rated comics by new and recognized cartoonists. In the years since its creation, Eros has become the main publisher of sex comics in the country. Offering up to ten different new titles each month, it crowds the adult shelves in comic shops, proving the existence of a large demand for this material. Following the fetish trends, Eros has expanded this niche and has even managed to introduce the notoriously heterosexual comics community to some gay sensibilities (e.g., *Nefarismo*). Needless to say, Fantagraphics promptly balanced its budget. After a few editorial mistakes and attacks from the female-cartoonist contingent on the sexism and exploitation reigning in the sex-comic world, Eros now offers a more balanced view, catering to various interests – and while the company's not quite politically correct, it also uses a number of women and gay cartoonists.

The success of Eros generated a wave of erotic publications that tried to grab a piece of the sex pie. Only the ones with a special angle survived. The *XXXenophile* series published by Greg Ketter in Minneapolis mixes sci-fi humor and sex in a very attractive package. Catalan folded by publishing too many non-sex books, and NBM has picked up where Catalan left off. NBM's Erotica line presents to the American public some of the hottest European cartoonists, from the early erotic Italian artists Crepax and Manara, to the hardcore Spanish out of *Kiss* magazine.

A new development is the translation of Japanese comics. Japan has a long tradition of explicit sex comics, and there, the genre is largely accepted in everyday life. The cliché of the salaryman reading S&M comics on his commuter-train ride has been the graphic representation of the acceptance of sex comics in society. Few comic publishers here have straddled the two industries of comics and the adult market, which also sells as vibrators, toys, and other such items.

Over the past five years, an entire mass market has been created, and productions feeding this market have taken up a large part of shelves in comic stores. Within what is essentially a commercial move (playing to a certain extent on the unease sex generates in "polite" society), different styles and inspirations have created specialized marketing niches. Humor, horror, cheesecake and bondage all have their dedicated titles and aficionados. The larger acceptance of alternative sexuality, the redefining of sex acts through their safety factor, played into the creation of foot fetishist comics and that ilk, while certain bestsellers of the '80s generated a whole industry of vampire erotica with strong homosexual currents.

The very quantity of sex comics published month by month proves the existence of a large audience for this material that one would assume represents customers over the age of 18. Problems arise when these adults want to shop in stores that are for the most part filled with material aimed at 12 to 14-year-olds. The incompatibility of the two "customer bases" would justify a split in retail outlets. As legal attacks against stores offering both styles of product continued, the owner of such a store would stop carrying adult material – letting his constitutional rights be suppressed by local interest groups – to safeguard his business and standing in the community. While the opponents of adult material in comics stores are quite vocal and have the support of conservative and reactionary local politicians, supporters of freedom of expression and commerce are sadly not often as easily stirred into action when it comes to comic books.

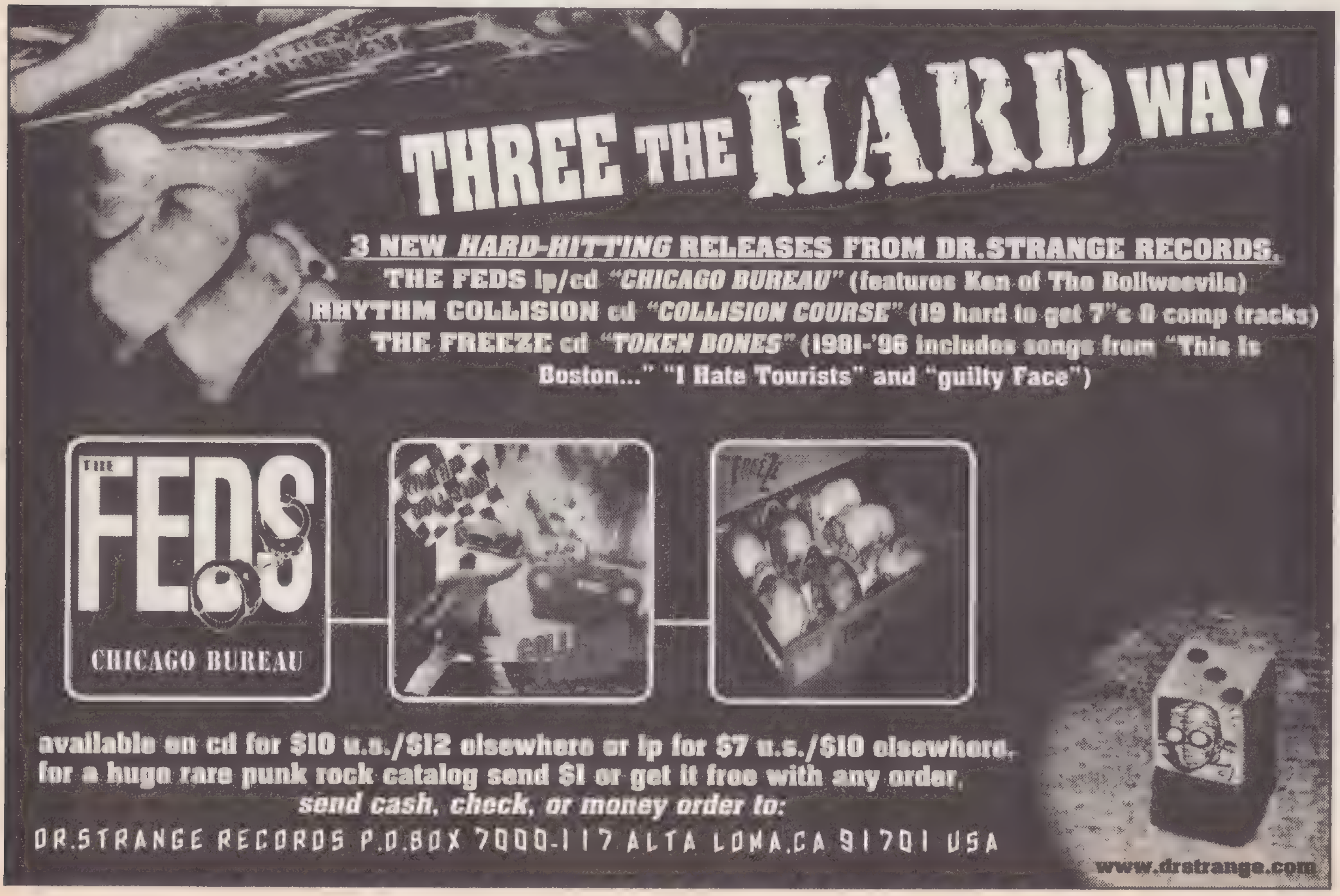
Honest Don's Hardly Used Recordings

SUBMISSIVES
"An Anvil Will..."
LP/CD DON006

LIMP
"Pop And Disorderly"
LP/CD DON008

Riverdales
"Blood On The Ice" 7"
7" DON009-7

PO BOX 192027 - SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94119-2027



THREE THE HARD WAY.

3 NEW *HARD-HITTING* RELEASES FROM DR.STRANGE RECORDS.
THE FEDS lp/cd *"CHICAGO BUREAU"* (features Ken of The Bollweevils)
RHYTHM COLLISION cd *"COLLISION COURSE"* (19 hard to get 7"s & comp tracks)
THE FREEZE cd *"TOKEN BONES"* (1981-'96 includes songs from "This Is Boston..." "I Hate Tourists" and "guilty Face")

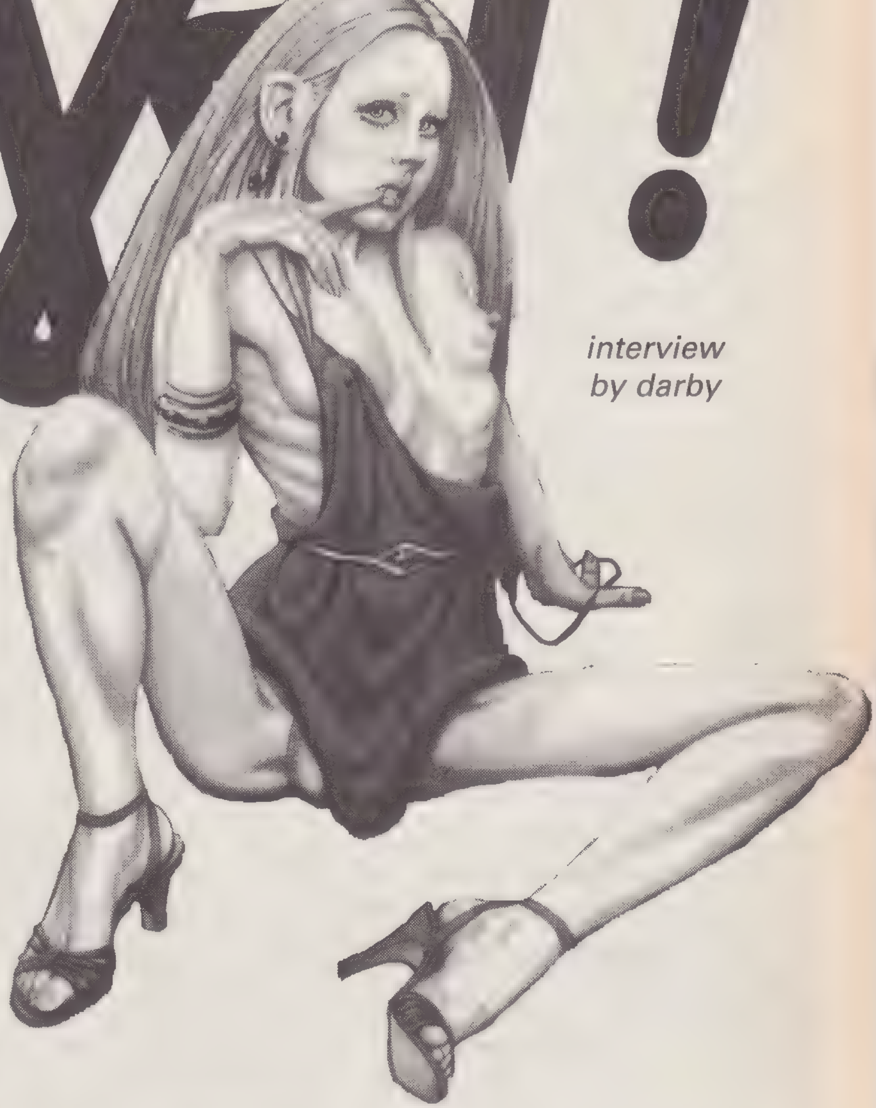
THE FEDS
CHICAGO BUREAU

available on cd for $10 u.s./$12 elsewhere or lp for $7 u.s./$10 elsewhere.
for a huge rare punk rock catalog send $1 or get it free with any order.
send cash, check, or money order to:
DR.STRANGE RECORDS P.O.BOX 7000-117 ALTA LOMA,CA 91701 USA

www.drstrange.com

TART!

interview by darby



Does the waif look turn you on? Do you think incest is best? If you could fuck with or get fucked by a giant clitoris... what does the idea of that do for you? While the '90s Lolita can't find any financial backing from a country fueled on nymphomania, it's interesting to see that a comic of this sort can be printed with hardly any notice – well, minus a few who thought this turbo-waif was a little too young for her britches (not that she's wearing 'em much). But is Tart underage... and does it matter? She *is* just a comic book character. A fantasy rendering from the mind of a man known to us fine smut fans as Howie Dard. Can we possibly push our morals and taste aside for just one moment in order to truely enjoy the beauty of something terribly sick?

Darby: I had no idea that you had a whole artistic life beyond *Tart* because I don't know anything about you, so when we talked the first time you were mentioning that you work on a lot of other projects, so tell me about what you do.

Howie: Well, basically I'm an art director and illustrator. It's really rough sometimes, though right now it's really busy, you couldn't have caught me at a worse time.

I have a knack for that.

It's not your fault, it's just these people are killing me – they give me stuff to do, and I agree on doing it, and all of a sudden it's twice as much work and I'm driving in and out of the city like an animal – I do the illustration here in New Jersey, I have a studio in the basement, and the computer stuff is done in New York with my partner. I really should re-locate to New York.

What companies do you work for?

BIG companies. Right now I'm working on a commercial for Dr. Scholl's, Franko American Spaghetti, American Express, alota stuff. I was doing' the Camel Cigarettes thing where they were trying to lure the kids into smoking.

Did they say, "We really want to appeal to kids"?

No, they didn't say that.

But it was insinuated?

No, I just knew, I could tell what I had to do. Later it came out and verified what I was thinking.

Did you feel guilty about this?

I did. [Laughter] But if I feel guilty about that, then what about *Tart*?

So you make a lot of money?

I should be. I fight about that all the time because of what they make me do: working all night, working weekends... I don't like getting paid as a regular illustrator who works regular hours. If you're going to push me like this, I want more money for it. I get in arguments over it, sometimes I win and sometimes I don't.

When did you start drawing, how did this all begin?

I graduated from Virginia State college, then I went to the school of Visual Arts in New York. After I graduated, I started doing ads and stuff. Then I did comics for other people's scripts.

Which comics?

Nothing that's famous... I don't want to name names or involve anybody's product with *this*...

OK, but you had your hand in comics, was it because you were a comic fan?

When I was younger I liked them a lot, yeah.

What kind of comics did you like?

Horror, Science Fiction, stuff like that. I like things to be reality-based; the more horror reality can stretch to, the more interesting.

What about *Heavy Metal*? Those were the first comics I ever got into because they were more science fiction, futuristic,

Quiet!... or someone will hear... and we will be interrupted before we get our ***ROCKS-OFF!*** *–Tart*

industrial, destruction of the world and what the survivors were like, almost *Mad Max*, but a little more drugs and like you said, future reality-based. And sex.

Yeah, I like a lot of that stuff.

I liked *Heavy Metal* because these people were really illustrators – beautiful artwork, like High Art artists, and your work is a step... most people have a Comic-y look to their comics, rounder and softer. Yours are almost like portraits, illustrative, similar to the *Heavy Metal* artists. What I find amazing in your work is it makes me wonder, "Did he photograph this and then draw it?" The expressions and the movement, you really capture that.

I pay a lot of attention to it, but I don't use models except to sometimes get an angle on a foot or a hand, not the whole body. It's all imagination planned one page at a time. Then I separate and design each panel after deciding how I want it to flow.

There're these subtle things that Tess is doing with her face and her body that are so natural and so feminine, yet she's almost like a man with her weird penis-vagina... her *hanging* vagina. You even have one scene where she's having sex with another woman as a male because she has such a large clitoris...

"We don't do Eros promotion. We really don't. We don't need to. I know more about *Tart* than most, because I like it." –Eric Reynolds, publicist Fantagraphics / Eros

Well, I've started changing her. When I first started, I had certain things in mind, and when I saw what they were... like people would say, "she's so skinny, I wouldn't be interested in her, blah, blah, blah..." I wanted her to be vulnerable and everything, but I did re-think it and change some things, because new things occur to me. A few books from now, she'll be completely evolved into how I want her to ultimately be.

I was wondering if there was any pressure to change her, because she looks like a really, really, young, anorexic, pedophilia-inspiring girl... were there any accusations?

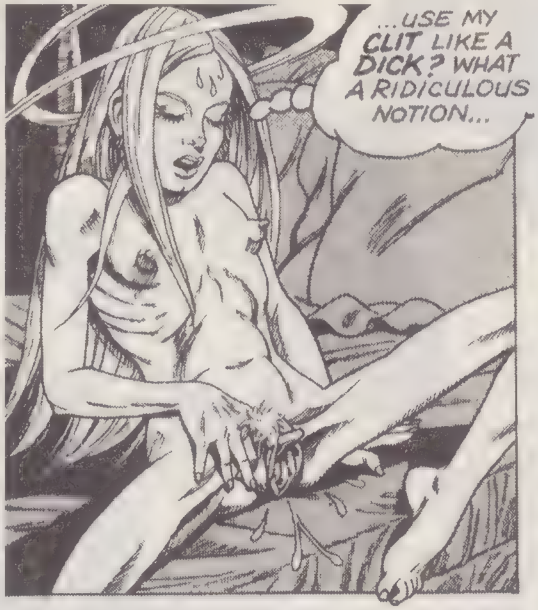
I was concerned about that myself. After I saw what I was doing, I worried that people might think that, when I was just trying to make her vulnerable *and* young – but not underage.

How old is she?

She's nineteen.

When *Tart* number one came out was when the "waif" look was in with all those starving models, and it seemed to me almost a commentary on the extreme waif. Symbolizing what was supposed to be the perfect girl, but taking the concept to an extreme.

It's always interesting to hear what people say, 'cause it's all kinds of different things... I don't get to talk to too many people about *Tart*.


...USE MY CLIT LIKE A DICK? WHAT A RIDICULOUS NOTION...

What king of feedback have you gotten?

Some letters were just wacko, so I kind of ignore 'em and how they think the character would be. I *do* have something in mind, not necessarily what their impression might have been so far, but that's my fault I guess.

Is Tess your sexual ideal? Are *you* attracted to her?

I'm attracted to her, but I'm also attracted to some of the other characters. Nothing specific, but I would be if I met her, yeah.

So you're able to create something that's very sexual.

You're saying that you'd be turned on if you met her, are you turned on when you draw her?

Maybe when I'm writing. Drawing? I don't know, depends on what else is going on. Right now I'm so deep in advertising that my mind is away from the subjects you're talking about, but I do have to be involved in it when I'm working on it, I get wrapped up in it. It comes out of what I think would be sexy, what I personally would feel.

What does the Michael character represent to you?

I tried to make her brother big and strong, a football player to be Tess' opposite. Hillary is another muscle-bound character that contrasts with Tess. <pause> *I'm* not a football player if that's what you're asking! [Laughter]

What are you like?

Athletic, but not as big as he is. Medium sized I guess, just under six feet, I weigh about a hundred and ninety, not a lot of muscles – I'm an artist after all.

Michael almost looks like a Black man; is he, are you?

Now why do you say that he looks that way?

Because he's very dark, and being the opposite of Tess, she's very light-skinned, and he's a dark guy.

Are you talking about *Tart* number one?

Yeah.

Let me explain to you what happened, *Tart* number one was done in full color, and the rest of 'em are just done in ink. So what you see there is just a bad printing of the tones. I didn't like that they printed it in black and white, they should've printed it in color, they *will* print it in color for the graphic novel. I also sent another book of illustrations to Fantagraphics to print called *Hardcore Dark*, most of the art is stuff I've done for *Skin Magazine*. And I am Black.

What about the incest, where does that come from?

Well, what do you mean?

Her attraction to her brother.

I guess you call it artistic license or something, I mean, I have a sister and I don't feel that way about her, so you can't make any real references from the thing except the obvious: I'm just writing completely out of my imagination.

Well, it's very imaginative, it's very sexy. It's hard to imagine you'd be turned on by a scene with a big, studly guy spanking a little anorexic girl who's supposed to be his sister.

I can't actually think of anything that parallels that in my life. That's why I'm surprised that anybody would pay any attention to it.

It's true that a lot of times when people really like things, they don't feel inspired to write fan letters, they just enjoy it, but if they're wacked or bothered by it, then they write; sometimes crazy people just want to be a

for a free catalog write to: NITRO Records • 7071 Warner Ave. Suite F-736 • Huntington Beach, CA 92647

the interpreters

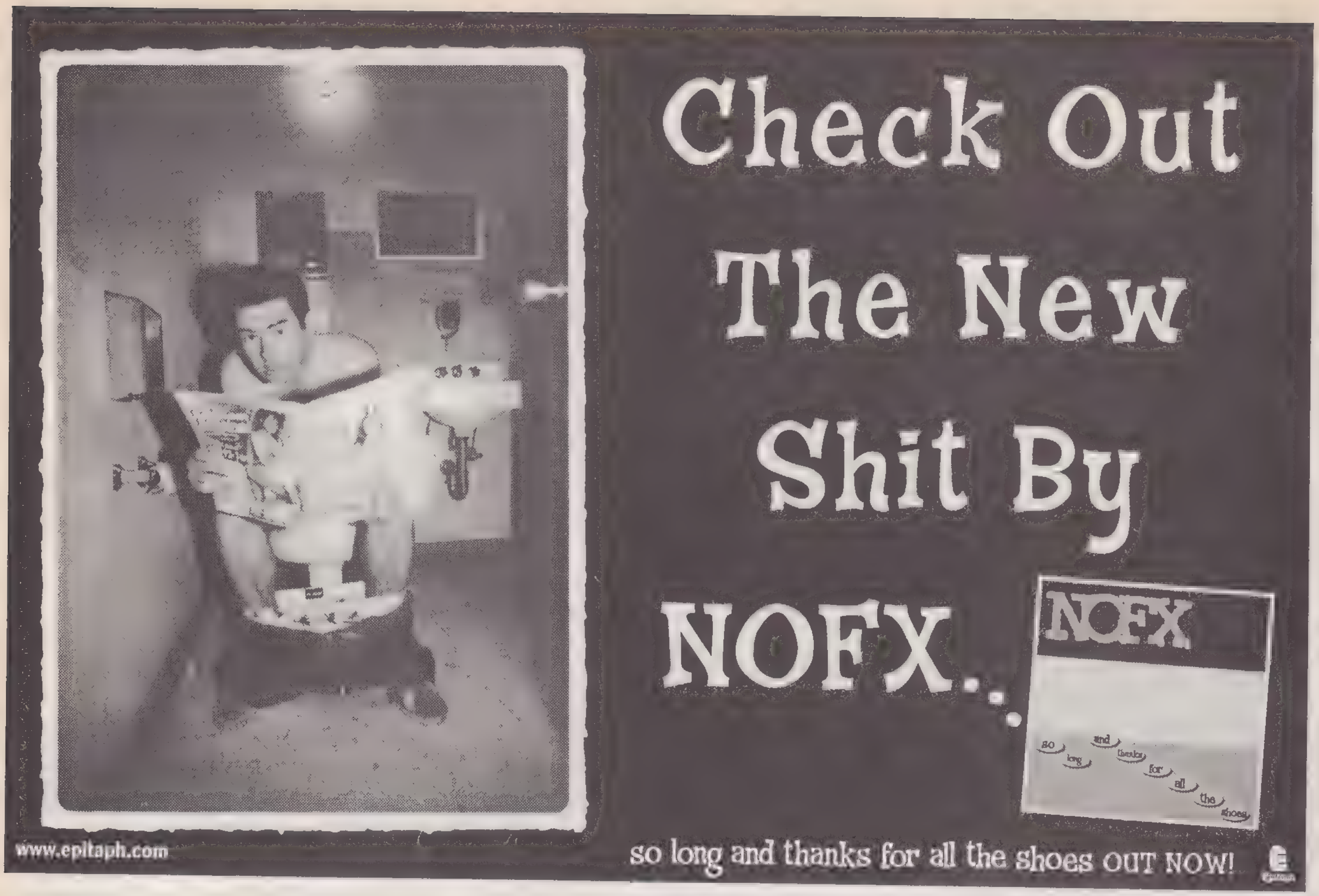
in rememberance of that | fine fine evening...

US debut triple A-sided 7 inch I remember b/w dogskin report

2 11 5 375021 5270

© 1997 Volcano Entertainment
foreign correspondence : PO Box 40764 Philadelphia PA 19107 USA   www.theinterpreters.com

TRACK. PROGRAM. DURATION. ATTACHE. POSITION. ORIGIN. STRATEGY


Check Out The New Shit By NOFX...
NOFX
so long and thanks for all the shoes
www.epitaph.com
so long and thanks for all the shoes OUT NOW!

part of it all, not that you have to be crazy to want that, but a lot of times you can inspire crazy letters, especially when things are sexual or seemingly deviant, so I'm sure you get your share of conservative people who for some reason got their hands on the thing who doesn't think incest is best.

I did actually get a weird letter from somebody who was saying how Tess looked just like his daughter and her friends, his tone sounded like he might have incestuous feelings, he didn't say it, but it seemed like it might have been the case.

So you said that "Howie Dard" is an alias for when you draw *Tart*, is there another alias for when you do your day job illustrations?

Yeah, but I don't want the people who hire me for that work to associate me with the other work, that's what I'm trying to avoid. It's not that I'm ashamed or anything, it's just that these people, advertising people in particular, would be like, "Hey, there's the guy who does *Tart!* We can't hire him." I don't really care that much, just trying to protect myself a little bit, but not too seriously because the names are very similar anyway.

Besides the alias, you have a very elusive persona, nobody at Fantagraphics knows you...

They've never met me, they're West Coast and I'm on the East Coast.

I ask questions and I try to talk to them about you... Eric Reynolds knew more about you because he's a fan and he's really liked your work from the beginning; actually it was Jim Blanchard who originally sent me *Tart*. They tell me how beautiful the originals are, but they don't know anything about you.

Well in addition to never having met me, it's because I haven't always been in the comix field, I was in advertising and book illustration. I just sat down one day and started it, and a friend of mine who *was* interested in comics said that I should send it to Fantagraphics. I said, "OK, I'll see what I can get for it," but the money is garbage. I don't mean to talk about money, but I'm not really happy with what they're paying me. The work is much much much more than that, it's almost insulting.

Well, do you have any other options?

I'm sure that I do, but I'm so busy all the time, and I don't like people to get into my business, especially as far as fantasies go, because they're untrustworthy. I have to try and do it myself, I think I'm trying to do too much actually.

Are you happy with the graphic novel arrangement?

Well, that's a good arrangement because it's printing stuff that I've already drawn.

So you've been doing this awhile, can I ask how old you are?

Um, about sixty years old. I started *Tart* three years ago, one issue a year. It's hard to work on it all the time with my other... If they paid me decently I wouldn't mind working on just that, but I make a *lot* more money doing other things than I do from *Tart*.

They must be pretty confident in your work if they're printing ten-thousand; that's a lot, I know comic artists who do five-thousand and that's considered a good run – it doesn't seem that way to me when I'm thinking, "The whole world, only five-thousand?" But it's a totally different thing than superhero comics or if you're working with a big company. I don't know anything about the finances, but I hope that they give you more so that you will continue to do it.

I'm gonna continue to do it, but I don't know who I'm going to be doing it for – somebody who's gonna be paying me enough money, that's all.

But isn't *Tart* something you do for yourself, like your own project?

Yeah, I would do only that if I was being paid well for it, but I can't afford to, I'd be out in the street.

Well maybe *Tart* will take off, maybe this interview will help.

I hope so – I don't want to be famous, I just want to be rich.

Send letters to Mr. Dard c/o Eros Comics, PO Box 25070, Seattle, WA 98125

say the F word

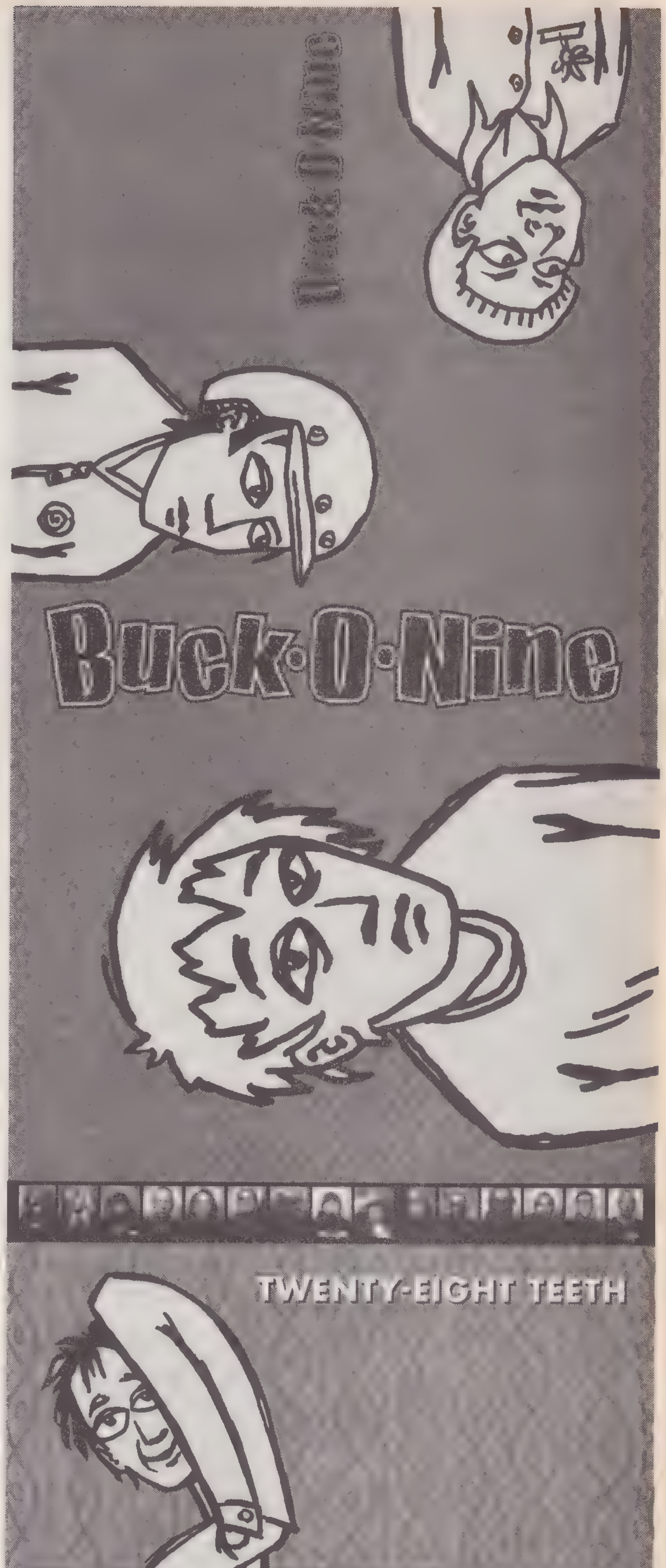
FLIPP

debut album available now!

featuring
I Wish I Was a Planet
Bleed and Change

http://www.hollywoodrec.com/flipp
produced by Julian Raymond for a Violent Society Productions
in association with Phil Kaffel and Brynn Arens

Hollywood RECORDS



Buck·O·Nine

TWENTY-EIGHT TEETH

TVT

OUT NOW ON CD/CS/LP
TVT Records, 23 East 4th Street, NY, NY 10003 Tel: 212.979.6410
Fax: 212.979.6489 www.tvtrecords.com © 1997 TVT Records

deftones

around the fur

the NEW ALBUM in stores

october 28th

also available,
the debut album ADRENALINE

Maverick Recording Company

73 MINUTES OF LYSERGIC
DEMENTIA AND
INTERSTELLAR
OVERDRIVE.

Sky Cries Mary

"A dream you don't want to end."

— Axcess

Sky Cries Mary

Their Warner Bros. Records Debut

MOONBATHING
ON
SLEEPING
LEAVES

www.wbr.com www.skycriesmary.com
©1997 Warner Bros. Records Inc.

Every guy I know who grooved behind horror movies and comic books when he was a tot,

The Last Gasp

When I think comics, there are a few people that come to mind immediately. One is Ron Turner, the owner of Last Gasp – a comic/book publisher and distributor. Almost six years ago, Last Gasp became our first distributor, holding our hand as we entered the scary world of zine distribution. When we decided to do a comic issue, it was as if the whole comic world just said, Okay, jump aboard, and Last Gasp was among them. We started going to the Cons, and Ron was always there, inevitably hooking us up with some young artist snooping out the publishing world. And we'd always end up at some bar, his treat; or some party we otherwise wouldn't be invited to, with his cute son Colin. Ron's a big bear of a guy, with a huge white beard, big beer belly and nose, and a permanent sort of grin – super friendly, especially if you're a cute girl. His hugs are what legends are made of. I couldn't help but think of him as the Santa Claus of comics.

Though Karen, Noël, and I did a number of interviews with Ron, they usually ended up a documentation of the noise level at the locations we visited, and the number of drinks we consumed. Being an SF local, Karen Eng went back for a few more late nights with Ron in order to piece this thing together. –darby

Last Gasp wasn't built in a day – its history sprawls with personalities, plots, (counter)cultural events, subplots. And in the center of the maelstrom sits Ron Turner, Last Gasp's founder, conductor, and primary witness – and a beloved benefactor to the underground comics community.

Due to forces slightly beyond my control, I had to interview Ron at least a couple times, putting me directly in the path of his legendary generosity. He plied me with books, mutton stew at the local Mexican joint, beer and burritos at the Last Gasp yearly benefit, martinis at Planet Hollywood, encouragement, and long, winding stories about everything. Our interviews went hither and thither – every question prompted a complex answer (and I always seemed to be drunk). You have before you a distillation of our conversations: like a smooth shot of single-malt scotch.

How did you get started in comics?

We were *really* poor. My dad was off in the Marine Corps in China in '44, and my mom and I took a train out to California from the Midwest. When we stepped off the train in Fresno, I had a big stack of comics. And I had to think back, where the hell did those come from? We didn't have any money for that. Ten cents for a damn comic book, and I had maybe 30 or 40 of them. All mint, because I handled them very carefully. They were brilliant things – I just loved them. I was about five then and just starting to read.

Later it dawned on me: Here we were on a train, I had a really cute mom who was about 26. She's about the only woman, and these guys would come over and hustle her and probably drop a comic book in my lap and say, "Hey kid, read this…" That's where I got my first start in comics. Otherwise, I probably would have never gotten into it.

There were hardly any comic stores in the late '60s – probably under a hundred in the whole country. But there were over 20,000 head shops, and posters were in them all. A company called Print Mint had set up a poster distribution out of their store on Haight St., which took off and made a fortune. The guy who ran that place liked comics – he began bringing out this thing called *Yellow Dog* and began using all the cartoonists who were drawing in the underground press.

Some of the guys who were doing posters were doing comic books as well. Robert Crumb, who was working for a greeting card company out of San Francisco, had drawn some comic books, and one finally got published called *Zap*. So, at some point, one of these guys did what we would call the first underground comic. Maybe it was Jack Jackson with *Snotnose*. …Anyway, everyone sort of migrated to San Francisco and worked at the underground newspapers.

I came up to San Francisco in '67 after I went to graduate school at Fresno State in psychology. After college I went off to the Peace Corps in Sri Lanka in '62, came back in '64, and had to retake a core course of my classes at Fresno State. I discovered a bunch of scandals going on and started my underground newspaper there. It was called *Flagrante Delicato*; if anybody has a copy of it, please send it to me, I don't have a copy and will pay $100 for one! Our first cover was two Jesuses on crosses doing a 69 number on each other. This was a bit much for Fresno. I thought everybody in the world was doing underground papers. I always thought we were really far behind the rest of the world...

I exposed the DA in Fresno as a closet gay, who was out letting other gays be attacked because he knew nobody'd turn him in, so about the time that issue came out, we had to make it out of town pretty quick. Luckily, San Francisco State had some sort of experimental program and said, oh we'd love to have you. So I came up and was trying to effectively be a graduate student in experimental psychology.

No money – I was commuting from San Francisco to Fresno four days a week to work on the railroad. It was the most nuts thing I ever did. I had to drive 220 miles, hop on a train, go out all night, come back…

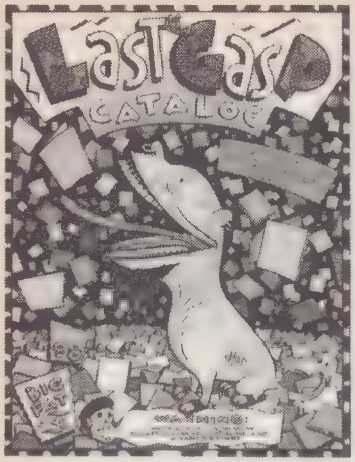
How'd you get involved in *underground* comix?

My friend had a New Year's Eve party over in Berkeley. We were all stoned on some wonderful Panama Red, and he brought this comic out, and I finally made a connection back to my childhood. It was Robert Crumb's stuff. It was hilarious! I remember I said, To hell with the rest of the party. I just read this thing over and over again.

So then I needed to find out where to buy them. I went and met Gary Arlington at the San Francisco Comic Book Company – he's still there. He was selling all these comics like *Snatch* and *Jiz* and *Zap* under the counter. That was very thrilling…

About a year after that, '69 or so, another friend was working at the Berkeley Ecology Center, the first in the country. To raise money, I thought, "Why don't we do an underground comic book about ecology? That would make sense." So, we got together and tried to draw one. Well, some people had good stories, but they weren't artists. My drawing was for shit. So I said, "This isn't working, but I know these cartoonists, I could find them." … So I ran around for a couple of months meeting with cartoonists.

I was learning how to sell and distribute. I would go over to Print Mint and Rip-off Press and places and sell my Ecology comic *[Slow Death]*, then my second,



Get the fabulous Last Gasp catalog, designed by Gerald Kelleher. Send $5 to: 777 Florida St. SF, CA 94110. 1-800-366-5121. email: lastgasp@hooked.net or www.lastgasp.com.

then my third comic. The second was called *It Ain't Me Babe* – edited by Trina Robbins – the first all-women's comic.

So I went off across the country and met with as many possible political groups or whatnot, trying to convince them that this was the wave of the future. I was little Ronnie Comic Seed, passing out comics all over the country. Eventually, we set up a couple hundred places to buy comics. People were very open. If they had any slightly alternative business, you talked them into taking something to appeal to their clientele. And comics did.

But then, I was giving stuff to Print Mint and Rip-off Press, and when it came time for them to pay me, they said, "Oh, we're sorry, we don't have any money. Take our comics." It was okay – I worked my statistical background and was able to show them it didn't matter where I put the comics, or whether I put my own or a lot of others with them. They'd sell at about the same rate.

From the time Print Mint and Rip Off paid in books instead of money, I was distributing. People would ask, "Hey, can you get me any drug books?" Or, "Hey, do you have any drug magazines?" So I'd start finding out where to get those. The comic stores would say, "Hey do you got any comic-related stuff besides this?" And I would find some and start putting that in. I started asking people, "What do you want?" That's how the distribution started – slowly, because I didn't have any capital to fool around with.

What's your secret to survival?

We're not a consignment distributor, like most of the distributors that are still alive. We buy our goods straight up and just continue to sell them. And we pay Net 60 for the whole lot. That means that we own a great amount of our inventory. Most distributors that still exist today don't own their inventory at all. There's great tax advantages to that. They don't have to pay any money because they don't own it.

But also we diversify. Diversifying is going from just comic books to drug education books to Beatnik literature to fetish books to children's books… in other words, having a wide variety of things so that if one particular area is sliding a bit, maybe the others will pick it up. I think if you look at all the stuff that we do now, our largest money-making area is just regular trade paperback books. And reprinting our out-of-print books is a way to provide a steady sales base throughout.

What are Last Gasp's objectives?

The very original objectives were to educate or share information about social issues. When this got shifted over from being kind of a project to a company, then it was a matter of bringing all kinds of what we thought were the best new artists, dealing with a great range of social issues.

Then there was the shock value of things. I think a lot of the things we've been known to publish or purchase for distribution have had the air of things that nobody else would handle or touch….a lot of other people came along and did the same. I'm not saying we're the only ones that ever did this, but I think that we've done it consistently over the years.

It's interesting that some of the big publishing houses that used to throw their noses up in the air at us at the trade shows years ago now cater to and carry great amounts of this stuff. But they're trend followers. And I don't know that we in fact are trend-setters, but I think what we look out for here – especially for our distribution – is what's cool, interesting, and hot.

What about censorship?

A lot of people say, "You make dirty comics, you're trying to put this in front of kids." I say no no no. The worst thing we could do is make some kid think that they're seeing a Donald Duck comic book when they don't want to see more graphic stuff. That's not at all what we want. It's usually parents who don't pay any attention to what the kids are doing at comic stores, let the kids run around and grab whatever, and then get upset if it happens to be an adult comic.

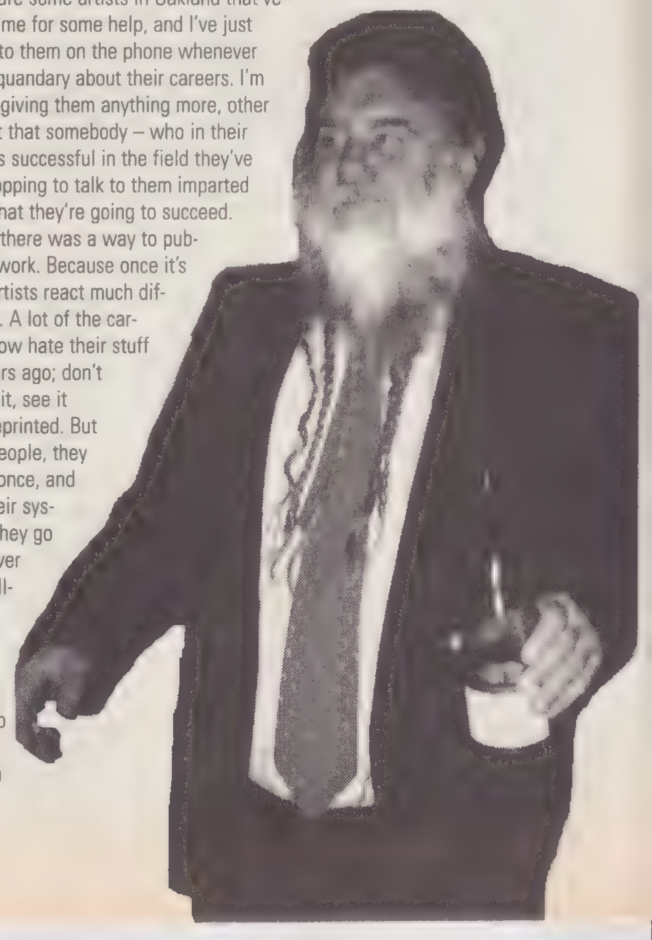
With comics it's a hard thing… a lot of people have a hard time with this. We had a bad trial once where a judge said, "Of course this was designed for kids, they're comics, aren't they?" In this country, comics were pushed for children only. It wasn't seen as literature. Even the Classics Illustrated were considered a child's way of looking at literature. It's a big mental block in this country, but a lot of people like their information presented to them in a graphic format. We have humor, horror, science fiction, sexual commentary – everything you can get in a trade paperback category is available in a comic-book category also, for adults. But that goes unregistered in the minds of many of our judicial people.

Do you see yourself as the Santa Claus of the comics industry?

The Santa Claus of comics? Oh, God. If I've helped anybody, fantastic. That's a great thing to be remembered for. I think you give help to people for a time, and if so, great, but… I'd like to see a lot more people helping each other on this whole planet. This departmentalization of what you're supposed to do seems to interfere with the human spirit.

There are some artists in Oakland that've been asking me for some help, and I've just tried to talk to them on the phone whenever they're in a quandary about their careers. I'm not sure I'm giving them anything more, other than the fact that somebody – who in their eyes appears successful in the field they've chosen – stopping to talk to them imparted the feeling that they're going to succeed.

I wish there was a way to publish a lot of work. Because once it's published, artists react much differently to it. A lot of the cartoonists I know hate their stuff from ten years ago; don't want to sell it, see it around, or reprinted. But then other people, they get it down once, and it's out of their system – then they go on to whatever their true calling is. But the Santa Claus… Maybe we all take it too seriously. Just lines on paper, folks.



¡SE HABLA PUNK!

BLIND PIGS "São Paulo Chaos"
Fast, humorous, and hard to the core, Brazil's Blind Pigs play mean, melodic guitar-punk that kicks ass! 14 songs in 26 minutes go by like a swift kick to the groin, in English and Portuguese. Includes the anti-hit "No Pistols Reunion" (60009-2)

NIÑOS CON BOMBAS "De Tiempo En El Momento De La Explosión"
Three guys with funny accents (from Brazil, Chile and Germany) forming an explosive combo of latin rhythms, jazz, punk, ska, bossa nova, cabaret stylings and more...mmm, mmm, das güt! (60011-2)

WRITE FOR A FREE CATALOG:
PO Box 1216, NY, NY 10156
E-Mail: info@grita.com
web: http://www.grita.com
the Grita! Hotline: 1-212-69-69-379

OLD 97'S

TOO FAR TO CARE

The new [illegible] featuring
"[illegible]" and "Four [illegible]"
with Exene Cervenka

y one of the Texas quart

oduced by Wally Gagel

TOO FAR TO CARE

Touch and Go

Quarterstick Records

The Delta 72
The Soul Of A New Machine
tg182 lp $9.00 cd $12.00

Polvo - Shapes
[illegible]

Man Or Astro-Man?
Made From Technetium
[illegible]

Pegboy - Cha-Cha Damore
[illegible]

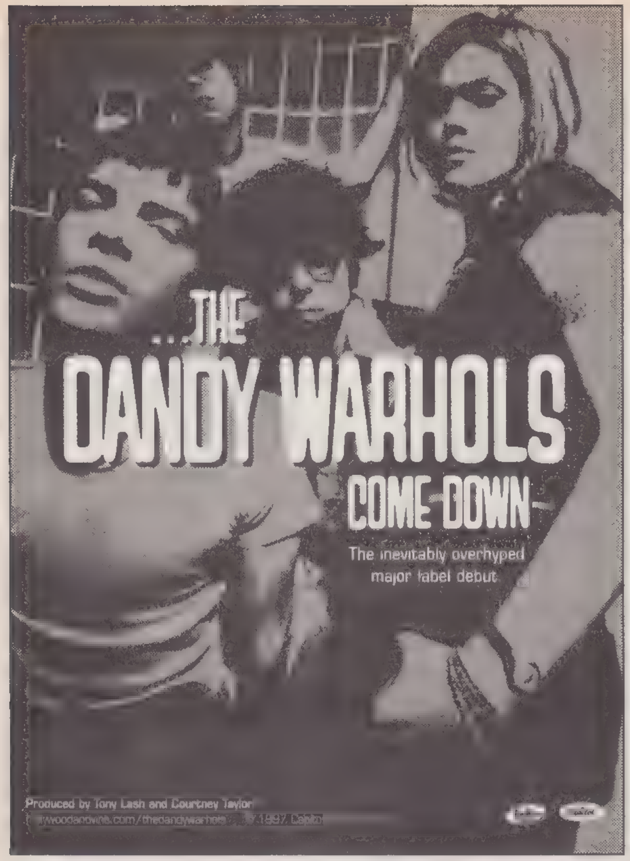
Shipping News
Save Everything
[illegible]

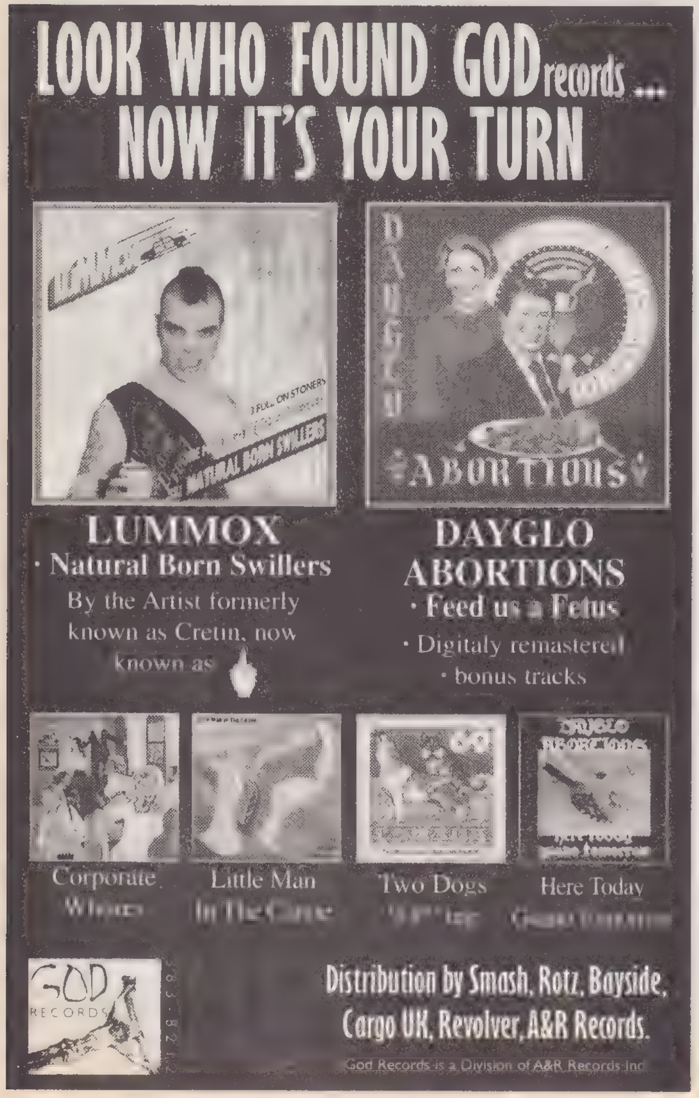
Half Japanese
Heaven Sent
[illegible]

My Dad Is Dead
Everyone Wants The Honey
But Not The Sting
[illegible]

Emperor Jones

Mail Order
P.O. Box 25520 Chicago, Illinois 60625
Visa and Mastercard orders please call
(800) 3-TOUCH-U (orders only)


...THE
DANDY WARHOLS
COME DOWN
The inevitably overhyped
major label debut
Produced by Tony Lash and Courtney Taylor
hollywoodandvine.com/thedandywarhols ©1997 Capitol


LOOK WHO FOUND GOD records ...
NOW IT'S YOUR TURN

LUMMOX
· Natural Born Swillers
By the Artist formerly
known as Cretin, now
known as

DAYGLO
ABORTIONS
· Feed us a Fetus
· Digitaly remastered
· bonus tracks

Corporate Whores
Little Man In The Canoe
Two Dogs [illegible]
Here Today Guano Tomorrow

Distribution by Smash, Rotz, Bayside,
Cargo UK, Revolver, A&R Records.
God Records is a Division of A&R Records Inc

i ♥ my local comic book store...

GOLDEN APPLE

Most of us in the big city have a neighborhood comic book store we can call our very own. But we're not all so lucky to have one we are *proud* to call our own. Golden Apple has had their door open to us zine folk for a long time now Even when the store was only half its current size, they made the space for us to share the shelves. But besides dropping off copies of the new issue, I never stopped to take a glance at the core of what my local comic book store was all about. But perhaps even back then, I was experiencing it in subtle ways I had yet to understand; that the things Golden Apple represented to our community was beyond just the comics they sold.

The Golden Apple Family is made up of Bill (dad), Sharon (mom), Ryan and Damon (the kids).

Darby: Most of the employees seem like they're related too.

Sharon: Oh, yeah, absolutely. I do call myself the Golden Mom.

So how did this all start?

S: You mean, how did we get into the comic business? When our boys, Ryan and Damon who are 24 and 26, were about 4 and 6, Bill said to me "What am I going to do with these guys? I want to do something really fun with them – I don't like spectator sports, what do I do?" He opened up the newspaper, and there was an ad for a comic book convention. As a young boy in Brooklyn, he had collected comics. So he took Damon, because he was six then. *Star Wars* was just coming out and they really got into it. Then he took Ryan to another one and the kids really liked it, and Bill started meeting people in the business, and he thought they were so interesting. We all started going down to the San Diego Comic Con as a family. Bill was working for a big Canadian financial company, and he was Vice President of Western Operations. He had a huge office in Hollywood overlooking the Hollywood sign… and he was going to give all this up for comic books! [Laughs] We've been married now thirty-two years. But then it was about ten and I just said, "Oh my god, this is terrible. I married someone with a really good substatial career, a retirement plan." So I was pretty rebellious when he initially wanted to do this. But I didn't know what the best in comics would be. I didn't know that we would own this exciting store. That all these exciting people would come in here. Of course, it wasn't like this when we started. Today there's 6 or 700 different titles. When we started eighteen years ago, there were like 25-30 titles tops.

Wow. Superheroes mostly?

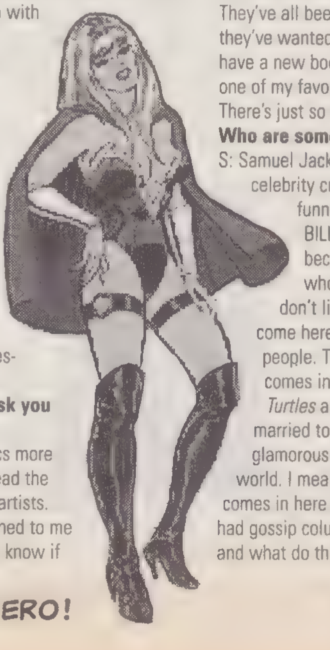
S: Most of them were superheroes. There were a few like *Love and Rockets*, some of the real alternative stuff, which is now more mainstream almost. You know, it's just been an amazing, exciting life. Seeing the quality of the people and how interesting they were… I started coming in more and more. Then I started helping a lot. The main thing that hooked me was that from day one when I worked in the store… I'd say ninety-nine percent of the customers assume that you know your product. So I was a little embarrased, I'd say "Well, I don't really read them." And they would go, "Oh, let me recommend something. I'll think you'll like this. What are your interests?" And I just thought that was so fabulous, I was hooked.

So your sons started working here really early.

S: Absolutely. We had them bagging and boarding and all that. Sometimes we *made* them work here, and they didn't like that so much. But all their friends would go, "Oh you're so lucky." Once all their friends wanted to work here, then they wanted to work here. [Laughs] But the boys really liked it. They both have since gone to college. Through this, they figured out what they wanted to do with their life. Damon really likes the movies and ended up going to film school.

And where's Ryan?

S: And Ryan's business; he really likes the promotions; starting with the Zine Fest. That was his first really big promotion, thanks to you. You were great with him, and everybody was. And it's given him a lot of confidence in figuring out that he wants to do event promotions. He's good at it. He's got a good sense and he's calm under pressure.



FLAXEN. G.A.'S VERY OWN SUPERHERO!

So why didn't you want me to ask you about comics?

S: I know about the people in comics more than I know about comics. I don't read the comics. I know the writers and the artists. I've picked up a few. Bill has explained to me that not everybody has the – I don't know if it's the hand/eye coordination or whatever it is – to go from the picture to the balloon or the balloon to the picture. I have to read this way [demonstrates L to R].

Oh, so the visuals are almost distracting.

S: Yeah, I can read everything and then I can go back and look at the pictures. It's very distracting for me. I don't get it. The main thing I like is the art. The artists. I could sit and look at all the books, and I have. I could name hundreds of our fabulous artists. I could tell you their work, I could point it out to you in a museum. And we have a lot in our home; Mobius being probably my favorite. But I only know the stories because I read the previews and I listen to everybody talk. It's interesting, I wish I did read them. I do look at the books a lot, and the magazines. Certainly reading things like yours. It's fun.

Who have you enjoyed meeting the most?

S: In the comics industry? My favorite comic book people are Neil Gaiman who wrote *Sandman*, Frank Miller… They've all been here. I think we're so fortunate that they've wanted to appear here. They come every time they have a new book coming out. Dave Stevens is wonderful, one of my favorite artists. He did *Rocketeer*. Who else? There's just so many people I like.

Who are some celebrities that shop here?

S: Samuel Jackson was just here. He's probably the favorite celebrity customer of all the employees. He's a kind and funny and lovely man.

BILL [walks in]: The problem with celebrites, because most of the publications like to know who are the famous people who come in; we don't like to talk about it, to tell you the truth. They come here because they just like to be treated like people. There's certain people like... Kevin Eastman, comes in here. He did the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and he owns *Heavy Metal* Magazine and he's married to Julie Strain. You know, they're a really glamorous couple. Kevin's like the greatest guy in the world. I mean, he wouldn't mind if we say, "Okay, Kevin comes in here and he likes to shop." Other people... we've had gossip columnists come and say, "Well, who's been in and what do they buy?" And that's an invasion of privacy. I

don't want to do that.
S: Because we want them to come back.

I think it's interesting, like when we did that Zine Fest and Robin Williams was here. He was very enthusiastic and sweet.

B: Matt Groening comes to the Zine Fest every time, and that's a good example. He comes because he genuinely loves the zines.
S: That's how he started.
B: He wants to get one of everything here. He wants to go around and encourage everybody – and he doesn't want to do interviews. We had a couple of TV crews here and they wanted to interview Matt Groening, and he said "No, the story is the zines. Go and interview the zine guys, don't talk to me, I'm here as a fan."

SHARON

You also include a lot of events besides the zine fest that don't really fit the perception of what a comic book store is involved in.

B: My mindset on the store has always been that we are a pop-culture store. There's good comics, there's bad comics, there's junky comics, there's sexy comics, there's intellectual comics. We carry stuff with pictures in it. We're about entertainment. And so, if you're in here to buy comics and maybe you have your wife or husband with you, there's going to be something for them to find also. That's what I always wanted to do here. Right now, one of the best selling things we have is the South Park t-shirts. Last night we had a big promotion for the official KISS photographer of 20 years. He has a book and a lithograph and we had baseballs and t-shirts. The week before that was the LA Radio personalities book.

There's always a dark side even in the comic world and it has to do with the fact that comic book stores attract kids, and there are things in comics that some people think kids shouldn't see. Recently there were the two men who were arrested and their store has been since closed, I think it was because some kids got their hands on X-Rated comics. I don't remember their names, but the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund is helping out.

B: I'm not an expert on the Oklahoma City thing, but I know it had nothing to do with kids. What it was is that there were some people in the community who took it upon themselves to go after comic book stores for selling obscene material. And it wasn't about selling them to children, and it wasn't the way that they were displaying them. They went in and launched a complaint and said they were selling what they called obscene material. It's the same group that has recently gone in and proceeded against Blockbuster for renting the *Tin Drum* movie, which won an Academy Award, saying it's obscene also.

That was in the same town?

B: Yeah, Oaklahoma City. The idea of these suits is not to win, so much as to drive the people out of business. Because these poor guys in the comic book stores don't have money, they had to close their stores and they both got divorces. They just couldn't pursue the suit anymore whether they were funded or not; it just took its toll. We thankfully never had those kind of problems, being that we're located on Melrose Ave. in Los Angeles. And this store has always been an adult store. ninety percent of our sales come from people who are over eighteen years of age. We've done surveys. We don't kick kids out, we don't make them uncomfortable, hopefully. We have areas that are specifically designed for children, because their needs are different. The problem is that the general public still perceives comics as being entertainment for young kids. That's just not the case. And we're not educating kids to read comics. I don't mean "we", Golden Apple, but the Industry is not helping kids to become adult collectors or readers. Because we're not feeding the pipeline, but that's an industrywide situation. What I try to do is bring in more women readers and more general readers. More hip readers, regardless of age, sex, gender, race, creed, religion or whatever. But I don't market directly to children because it's too difficult. They're too fickle. Adults read comic books, they read *Spiderman*, they read *Sin City*, they read *Stray Bullets*, they read *Superman*. Even the stuff that's pitched to kids, the Disneys and the stuff that attracts people that are fans of the TV shows, the *Batman Adventures* and *Superman*, is read primarily by adults, people over 18 years old.

So have you had problems?

B: No. The only problem, the only complaint that we've ever been aware of is one woman who took exception to an *X-Men* book, where one of the characters was killed. We try to be real responsible about how we display stuff and what we display. We do have a separate room that's for the hardcore stuff. It's got swinging doors on it, and is posted Adults Only. But needless to say, we try to carry things that will sell to our customers. We don't carry stuff that we think is artistically not saleable, that I don't think will appeal to my customers. There's also stuff that I don't want to carry, because I just am not comfortable with it. There's a whole line of books that deal with characters that look like they're under age.

Like sex?

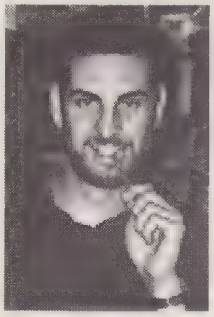
B: Yeah, and they're always having sex with their mothers, with each other, and their brothers and sisters. And I don't think there's a large enough market for it that my customers as a group would be deprived of not seeing it, so we just don't bring it in.

Do you have people complaining "Oh, you're censoring..".

S: Glenn Danzig.
B: There's a couple of Glenn's books. I went to him, and I said, "Look, I support your line, we carry everything, but with these specific things, I'm just not comfortable with it." He said, "I understand that. All I ask is that you apply this uniformly, that you don't single out my books." I told him that if he could show me other stuff with this kind of subject matter that we're inadvertantly carrying, I'd gladly take it out. He has and we've done that. So we have a real good working relationship. There's been occasions where kids have come in and wanted to buy stuff that we think is inappropriate, and we've asked for their parents to come in. But that's very infrequent.

And other people that you know who have stores?

B: You know, what I found is that most people who are looking out for the morals of others and are trying to worry about kids, really don't have any idea of what kids are looking for. I mean, kids are not looking for sexual stuff. When kids come in here, they're looking for baseball cards and they're looking for superheroes. They're not trying to sneak in to the adults only room. On rare occasions when kids are trying to get stuff that we think they may not appreciate... we wouldn't sell copies of the *Watchmen* to eight year olds, because we don't think they'll enjoy it. There's nothing in there that I think anybody would find offensive, but it's a very deep book, it's a very adult kind of a book. It's about political and social morays and things like that. A superhero who causes cancer. It's just not a book for an eight year old. When I opened this store, I didn't look at it as a retail venture. That's a big difference with what we do here and what other people do. This is not a place where I figured I could buy oranges three for a quarter and sell them three for a dollar. I never figured, Wow, I could make more money doing this than anything else I ever did. That was never my motivation. What I wanted to do was have a place that was, for lack of another term, like a bar. Where people would come in and enjoy themselves and I could give them stuff that would make them happy. We brought in *Stray Bullets* when nobody else was selling them, and we brought in zines when nobody else was selling them. That's because we thought they would appeal to the demographic that we were shooting for, which is the hip 18-35 year-olds. And, knock on wood, it's worked. And that's why you don't come in here and find a lot of real expensive collectables and toys and you don't find things that say First Issue Collector's Item. You don't find a lot of special covers and rare kind of things. You find autographed stuff, because that's what we do, we bring in people and they sign stuff. But they're not for outlandish amounts of money. It really has never been about money. We need the money to stay in business to do what we do, but that's never been the main objective.


RYAN ! rocks.

S: We want our visitors to come back and buy the next issue. The minute they're a collector, they're not going to do that, because they don't open them up. They don't read them. They don't care about number two and number three. That's a shame. They say, "How many can I buy?" And I say, "You can buy one. How many do you need to read?" "Oh, I don't read them, I want to save them." "No, we don't want you..." "You don't understand, I want to spend money." "No, you don't understand. I don't want to sell you all my number ones. I want fifty people to each have one. I don't want to have one person to have fifty." They're just totally stunned. But we want to cultivate fifty customers that are going to live for number two... and four and twenty and look for something else that is interesting. Those are the kind of customers we want.

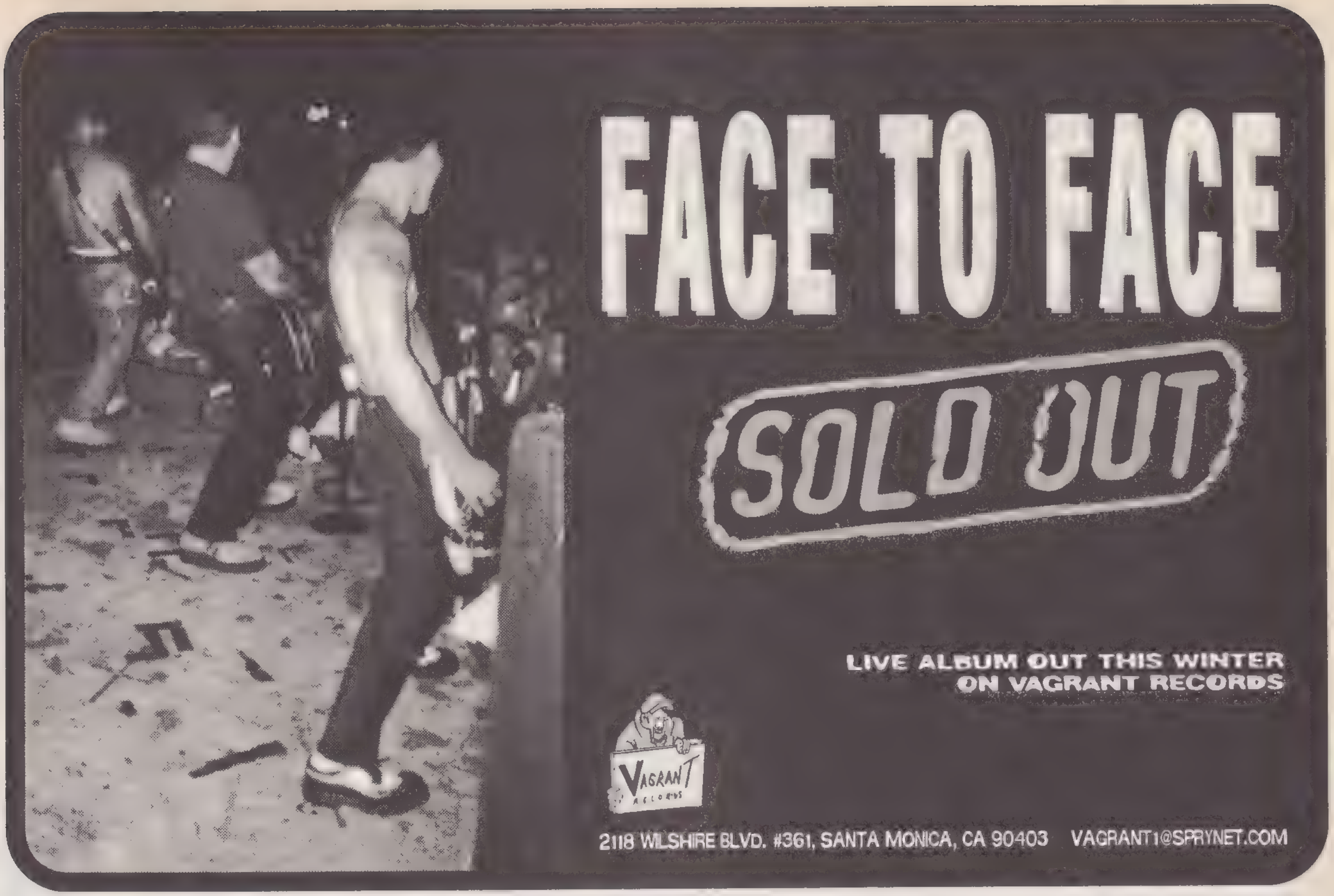
DAMON

B: When Rob Leifeld and Jim Lee have the first issues of their comic, we made it a big deal, they made it a big deal. Everybody made it a big deal and we have thousands of people here and we created an event. And people would write about it, they'd say, "This is like standing in line to see the Rolling Stones," and it was. The things that we've enjoyed the most, it was pretty much things like the Zine Fest where people came in and have a good time. We don't make as much money that night because people come in and they buy the zines directly from the publishers. But we bring the people in and it adds to the cool factor of what we do, and then the zine readers know they can come here and buy that stuff. Ryan spends a hell of a lot of time putting that together.

What's the biggest event you've had?

S: I think the most successful event was the Zine Fest.
B: The most people that we've ever had here have probably been for one of the Image signings. When we had Todd McFarland, Jim Lee... probably the most people would have been the Jim Lee signing for *Wildcats* #1. When he got here, we had 2,500 people in line waiting for him. This was right after the LA riots. One of the neighbors complained that there were people sitting on their lawns. And the police came out and established a tactical command post and brought in helicopters and everything and dispersed the crowd before we even started.
S: Some of the people had been waiting 24 hours.
B: We had people who were waiting for a day camping out.
S: Just like they do for concerts. And we said, do you want to see a riot? You tell these people they have to go home.
B: In my mind, there's probably two sides to this, I don't know what the other one would be, but everybody had numbered tickets and they all paid for their books. And Jim was capeable of signing 500 books an hour. He was ready to stay there, because he had done this for the last 24 hours and he was jazzed. We had Gene Simmons here to give him

visuals taken from the G.A. web site. our digital camera had a sinus infection at the last minute.



LIVE ALBUM OUT THIS WINTER
ON VAGRANT RECORDS

2118 WILSHIRE BLVD. #361, SANTA MONICA, CA 90403 VAGRANT1@SPRYNET.COM

an award for selling the most comics. We had a costumed character. We finally negotiated with the police and we were able to keep 500 people because of the way we sequenced the tickets, but conceiveably we could have had 3000 people show up

Has there been rough times in this store? I mean, it seems like ever since I knew about it, it was growing.

B. The industry basically went on a slide in 1993. We're a big retailer, so we went on a slide also. For a whole bunch of reasons, comic sales decreased significantly. The industry was always striving for mainstream acceptance. They wanted to increase the numbers of readers and bring in new readers, and they weren't equipped to do that, to sustain that. Comics are not a mass quantity item, they're a niche market. It's very difficult to get new people, especially children, interested in comics because of the competition: video games and television. Sharon said she never learned to read comics. Most kids don't learn to read comics, but they can pick up video games very quickly, computers. And the major players, the publishers, were not taking money and reinvesting it in the industry like they should have. The guys from Image were making millions and millions of dollars, but weren't putting that back into – in my impression – sound marketing and advertising programs to sustain the stuff. Everybody was taking and nobody was giving it back Marvel never had a cogent program to advertise comics. They advertise *Spiderman* and they advertise *X-Men*, but they advertise them as being video games and action figures and television shows, not comics. They say that they come from comics, but they don't tell you about them. And so, with this lack of support, and the fact that the sales were hitting an all-time high, the wrong people were reading the comics, and a lot of people were buying comics for the wrong reasons. People were buying them because they thought they'd go up in value, they were not paying attention and reading comics And there were a lot of people who were using the direct market of the comic book industry to get rich. And all that stuff came together and people just, for one reason or another, stopped buying comics in the same kind of volumes that they had. What we've lost is the people who were probably never going to be long term customers in the first place. This store has been able to rebound and we're back to about our 1993 levels of sales. The industry went from about a billion dollar industry to less than half a million dollar industry currently between 1993 and 1997

Wow.

B: The good news is most comic shops are serviced by what's called the Direct Market Distribution system, which is about 15-16 years old. And it's differentiated from newsstand distribution in that the books are sold to us on a nonreturnable basis at a higher profit margin. What that means is, a small publisher can solicit for the books and we have to order two months in advance and base the print run on the number. So it's economically a lot easier than going out into the newsstand market, which is called the RD market. The RD sells on a returnable basis, so you print up whatever you think you'll need, they'll put them out, see how many sell, and the rest is returned to you. You're taking too much of a gamble. So that's why this industry is real good for independent people. It's also very hard to get yourself noticed. Every month, we go through a catalogue from the main distributor which is bigger than the Brooklyn phone book. It's got thousands and thousands of items in it

That's kind of scary as a buyer isn't it? You have to be really sure of what you're buying. Do you have a wherehouse of stuff that hasn't sold?

B: No, we're real fortunate. Tony's been doing the buying here for 17 years and we have a computer system that we use to count the books and give us a sales history. And we have meetings, buying discussions, things like that. We have sales every once in a while where we clear out stuff…

So do you have comic book wars over the kitchen table? What comics do you like?

B: The comic that I always liked the best was *Conan*. When I was a kid, I read all the Marvel stuff, the *Fantastic Four*. *Sub Mariner* was my favorite because he had everybody – The Human Torch and Toro because I thought that they were terrific. And *Batman*. But as an adult, I got into *Conan*, and I would just read whole story arcs. And when graphic novels became popular, I would read those. I like Frank Miller books, just pretty much anything Frank Miller does. I like some of the *Sandman* stuff. I like *Love and Rockets* because I like the relationships in there, *Strangers in Paradise*, *Vampirella*, mainly because you don't have to worry about reading it. Story isn't that important when there's all this…

Good art.

Yeah, you get some really good art. I like the *Rocketeer*, I always liked the *Rocketeer*. I've read the *Watchmen* maybe six or seven times

I've never read it. You have to show me...

For more info visit Golden Apple at www.goldenapplecomics.com or – if in Los Angeles – live at 7711 Melrose Ave. (3 blocks west of Fairfax) Call 24hours 213/651-0455.

. . . . .

...random miscellaneous blank space which occurs like a disease in times of extreme lack of luck & sleep combined with untold deadline pressure. But it's moments like these when we can break beyond all the computerized typeface barriers... and get a little closer.
hello.

HEY, FOLKS, IT'S ZOO ARSONIST PRESS!
THEY'RE BAD PEOPLE, AND HERE'S PROOF! JUST READ ON...
KISS
PS 97
DEVO
PAUL SHARAR (CARTOONIST: CLOCK! RED CALLOWAY'S BIG BANG, AND MANNING TOWN)
BOB KURTHY (ARTIST, DESIGNER: POTATO MUMMY)
ERIC DUNN (WRITER: POTATO MUMMY)
MIKE KENNY (CARTOONIST: YOUNG BUG)
LORRAINE MAHRU (INTERVIEWER)

You've seen them – lumped in with the oh so glamorous small press areas relegated to the dank corners of comic conventions and wondered, "Gee, what's it like to be a struggling independent, how could I ever hope to join their proud ranks?" Well, after giving in to their demands for cocktails (one bottle of Seagram's 7&7, one 2-litre of 7up, one broken highball glass, and one hell of a mess in my kitchen later), the boys from the Zoo Arsonist Press tell you how, why, what, and otherwise spew their guts...

Lorraine: Define Superhero

Mike: Eric's the only one who does a Superhero book.

Eric: A Superhero's someone who does what the fuck they wanna do and deny everyone else around them, and their only laws are thine own.

Paul: Zoo Arsonist is against all Superheroes except one. Potato Mummy is the ultimate anti-hero.

Bob: A Superhero is an ideal righteous fantasy figure, like Jesus Christ.

E: [English accent] We're against Jesus and we're against Superheroes. In fact, we're against everything.

M: Most of the problem is with their silly outfits. That's what people talk about, like in Japan, that's the problem they have with American comics.

E: My big problem with 'em is that they try to stop drug-users and people who think for themselves. Long live all evil geniuses.

Speaking of evil genius, what made you decide to start your own comic company?

M: Paul Sharar...

P: Not really... it was *your* idea...

B: Paul Sharar is the reason why.

P: No... [argument ensues over whose idea it *wasn't*]

No one will accept blame for this?

B: OK, Paul's family helped him out, put some money together and he got a comic out...

E: And he bailed the rest of us out of jail!

B: ...and Mike was inspired to keep it going and put his

You still live with yer parents, you take superheroes seriously, money where his mouth was.

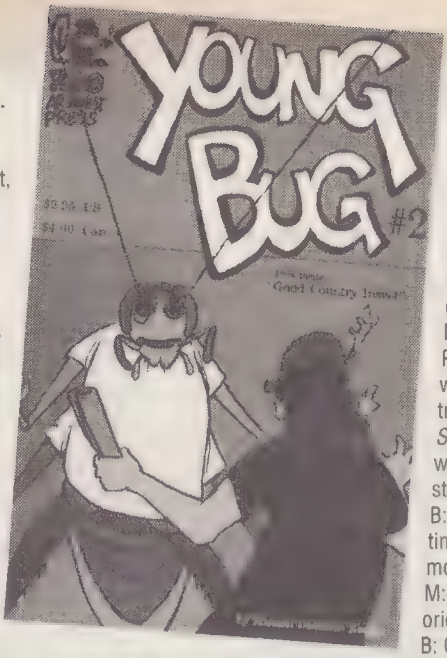
So Paul, as head of the finance department, run down some costs.

E: Don't forget about the heroin allowance.

P: Comics are about $1,500 to print, and you make about $80.

E: Take into account the drinking habits of the artists, and the fact that they buy materials and lose them...

M: I lost a lot of supplies in the airport just yesterday. Once I actually lost one of my pages right before we were going to send it out – luckily I had a photocopy which turned out very nicely, so anybody out there who's doing a book: a good photocopy looks exactly the same once it's printed.



What's an indie-sized print run?

P: *Big Bang* #1 was 4,000 – which was a mistake because we didn't come close to getting rid of them.

M: For Bob and Eric's comic, after all of the other shipping costs, it was about $1,500 for 3000 copies of a 24-page black and white with color cover.

P: So if you're a new artist and you print 3000 copies for $1,500, and you get 3000 orders, which you probably won't, but if you do, you'll make about $1,200-$1,500.

M: Enough to put out another one.

P: You won't get that many though.

How many will you get?

P: If you're decent like me, you'll get a thousand.

And if you're sub-decent like Bob?

P: About 600.

M: And if you do comics without attractive women or any action...

Like you?

M: [Laughs] Yeah, you'll get 400 orders. Plus selling at conventions and to your friends.

ACTUALLY, WE'RE HERE LOOKING FOR ONE P. MUMMY; FIRST NAME: POTATO, LAST NAME MUMMY.
DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HIM? HAS HE STAYED HERE?

So you're not actually making any money? [a chorus of "No's" and "Never's" resound] **Are you at least breaking even?**

P: Nope.

Think you will one day?

P: Never.

M: Some people do though I understand, there's this carrot being dangled that *some* people break even.

B: I think everyone thinks that everyone else is breaking even, but they're all afraid to just come out and say it.

E: We won't even be able to pay for our funerals.

P: Well my friend in the comic industry said, "Paul, you're going to be a big star – meaning you're going to be the brokest one out of all of us."

B: Who said that?

P: Chris Staros.

Who's Chris Staros?

P: He puts out this comic magazine.called *The Staros Report.* It's more interesting to talk to him than to read it though.

What kind of distribution do you got goin'?

P: We're carried by Previews Diamond which is the only distributor that carries *Superman*, so at least we're offered to every store.

B: [deep voice] This time we've changed more than just his hair!

M: We've changed his orientation!

B: Great, now we'll probably get dropped and/or sued...

M: My first issue of *Young Bug* in all of England sold one copy – but it got re-ordered! [laughs] I was surprised that anyone actually took the time to think about my comic. The reviews that have come out on it were pretty thoughtful, and so were the letters.

Do you guys get a lot of fan-mail?

B: Mike gets the most mail...

M: ...and the fewest readers! An overcrowded elementary school classroom could practically buy out my circulation – though my letter per reader ratio is high.

P: Fewer readers, but smarter readers.

E: *Potato Mummy* got a letter from this guy who probably had a seventh grade education tops, and he says, "*I guess* it's OK to write a story about booze, girls, and corrupt cops, *I guess.*"

So this is one of those autobiographical comics...

E: [Laughs] This guy, if he watched *Degrassi Jr. High*, he might learn something, or maybe if he watched *Growing Pains* he might learn something. [Laughter]

Well, being that you're among the booziest bunch of graphic novelists in the business and therefore authorities on the subject, what's the relationship between alcohol and comics?

E: We're against all authority!

B: [whines] I don't want my mom to read this.

So don't give her a copy.

P: Just to answer the question he has to have a drink!

M: We wouldn't start this interview until you plied us with liquor! [Laughter]

E: They're blueprints for leaving reality as we know it.

B: They're both escape tools.

P: At the last Comic Convention in San Diego, I got really drunk at the Fantagraphics party and made an ass of myself in front of a lot of people.

B: We all got really shit-faced because conventions are so mind-numbingly boring.

M: The only way you can possibly cope with Comic Conventions is to be really drunk. Last time I smacked my head really hard on a piece of metal.

B: You need anesthetic.

E: Or you could bring a lot of white-out and glue to sniff.

P: The best part of conventions is going out at night and forgetting about 'em.

Do you sell a lot of comics when you go?

B: Paul does.

M: Occasionally when someone's picking up one of Paul's comics, they grab too much width and take one of ours that's underneath it, so we clear some that way.

E: We usually throw our comics at people and hope they'll pick 'em up.

P: It's so depressing that at the end we just give 'em away. Some people wouldn't even accept 'em.

E: We traded some comics for hamburgers on the way home. Artists can scam anyone out of any bullshit if they want to.

M: Another connection between alcohol and comics is that they're both huge wastes of money. Going out to bars and printing comics – you'd be very rich if you didn't do either one of them.

E: Either way you can't win, either your comics will make you broke, or your booze will make you broke.

Speaking of broke, as you've all four attended, has the whole Art School experience had any lasting positive effects, or has it even made any difference?

E: Hey, it's better than Business School.

M: I think it has, just by life drawing, life drawing, life drawing, every day you just crank and you draw. It got me to loosen up.

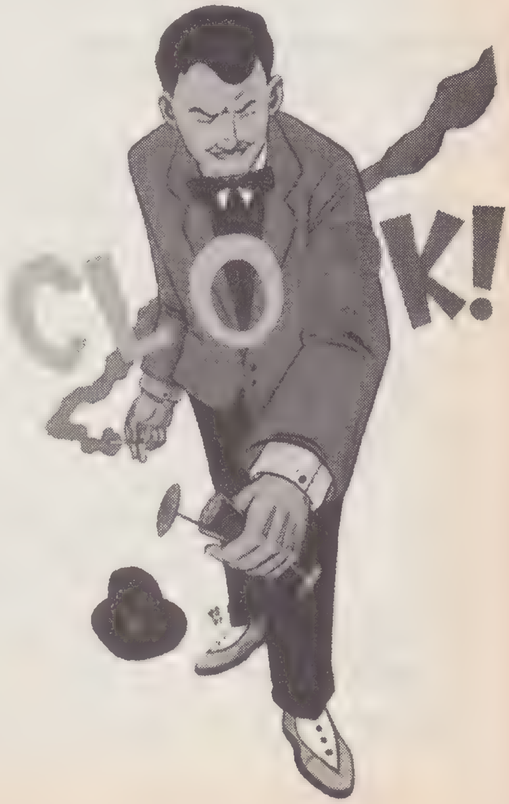
B: I didn't start learning anything in college until about two years ago.

How many previous years of college were there of not learning anything?

B: [huffy] I was in college a long time, but I think that's a rude question.

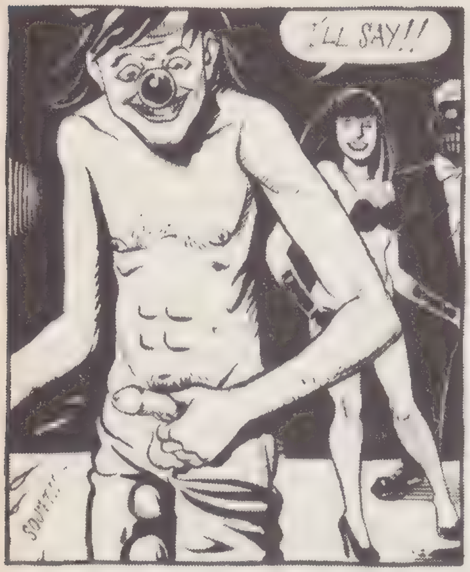
Oooh, a touchy subject.

B: That's like asking a lady how old she is.



and the only contact you have with 'gurls' is the lady you buy your comic books from. –Chris Tobey

Going out to bars and printing comics – you'd be very rich if you didn't do either one of them.


I'LL SAY!!
SQUIRT!!

I'm 23.

B: I said a *lady.* [Laughter]

Touché!

P: For me Art School was negative because I had less time to do comics.

B: But it was good because I met these guys there, though I had to wade through a lot of idiots.

P: I guess it did help my comics because we never would've met, and this company never would've been started.

E: I went to Film School, which is as bad and as dorky as Art School.

M: Where he got to learn on-spot how to annoy people.

Oh, he already knew how!

M: With comics, there's this kind of a distance from the reader, so unless they get fired up enough to write a hate letter back, Eric doesn't get to hear how annoying he is.

So, does the company have any goals to eventually pick up other artists and expand?

M: There's a couple people we're hoping will do books.

P: Fred Hofheinz we're hoping, but his comic is full-color so he's got to win a grant or something.

What kind of grants can you win?

E: You gotta suck alota dick for one.

P: I applied for the Xeric Grant, but they turned me down because they would have to start a new line – the Xeric pornography line.

M: They did do *Death Mickey.*

E: Actually the next thing we're working on is a Marinella trilogy, don't you remember the story of Marinella, the deformed child who fell off the bridge and cracked her head?

Ummm... [clinking of glasses is heard]

P: I think Superheroes should be dead. Superheroes *were* a good idea. A guy in tights that does good – the first time was fine, but why are thousands of people still stuck in this?

E: Throw 'em all in the grave.

B: I'm all for Rockstars though.

E: Know who invented the original Superman? Not the Superman of comics, Superman of yore.

Neitzche?

E: Yeah, you gave it away, it was supposed to be a contest.

Well that means I won.

E: Yeah, I guess you won, but there was no prize discussed, so there isn't one.

I always seem to be winning these contests with no prizes.

B: For the record, Lorraine put on lipstick for the interview.

I put on lipstick because after this I gotta date.

[group hoots and yells – guess it's a guy thing]

P: You're going on a date at this hour?

[changing the subject kind of] **In general, the comic book scene always seems to be such a boys' club, what's up with that?**

M: *We're* a boys' club I guess.

B: There's lots of pretty girls at Comic Conventions.

P: There's an organization now called Friends Of Lulu that supports all women artists.

M: There's a lot of girls in Berkeley who do comics. Those are good, I always pick those up.

I could be wrong about this, but when I was little I never read comics, it seems like a pastime that mostly boys have. Is that a fair assessment?

M: My friend's mom read *Young Love,* but I think they appeal more to boys because boys like cosmic rays and stuff. Girls had Hello Kitty.

E: Girls do Barbie and Betty Crocker, boys do comics, fireworks, and b-b guns. And blowing up cats' butts.

P: I *never* did that.

But Eric, you love cats!

E: It wasn't me, it was Kevin Cop, who will one day die, shot my cat in the stomach with a b-b gun, and it threw-up five times.

M: [anguished noise]

B: And now he's a fuckin' Cop.

M: He must've put that on his application.

E: Anyway, what was the question?

About comics being a boys' club.

P: That might turn around now because of Paul Pope, a cartoonist who coins his comics, 'Comics for Girls'.

B: He always has a real glammy photo of himself with his shirt off.

M: He's really handsome, he has big fans – all these girls.

Fabio style?

P: He wants to change around the whole ethic of comics and he wants teenage girls to like his comics. He's not hitting on them or anything, he wants to flip it around by having hot pics of himself.

M: But the idea of a sexy comic artist is an oxymoron.

E: It's absurd!

Present company excluded, of course.

E: Oh yeah, aside from that. These are obvious sex symbols here.

Dan Clowes is cute.

P: When I first did Xerox editions of *Red Calloway's Big Bang,* I would go up to artists I like and say, "hey, I'm just a little kid, check this out, I love you." I gave it to Dan Clowes and he threw it into his bag and said that he never really reads stuff until he gets home, but first he peeked through it and immediately comes to a picture of a clown masturbating – while some kid with his mom is looking over his [Dan's] shoulder. When I gave it to Robert Williams, he immediately flips to the same page with the clown masturbating and says, "Aw, a love story! How old are you?" I was 21 at the time, so he says, "You shouldn't be doing this."

E: I have Robert Williams' phone number, and if anyone wants to write to Zoo Arsonist and order our shit, I will give you his phone number!

So is it true that heading a would-be comic empire gets you laid?

E: Paul gets laid! The girls, the guys, the animals...

M: The anthropomorpics... I don't think anyone in comics is getting laid except in their role-playing games after the conventions. [Laughter]

P: I meet more Sorceresses than girls.

E: Wow! You have 16 stamina, you can almost go all night! What's your dexterity in bed, +5?

M: The biggest barrier to meeting girls at comic conventions is their chain-mail armor.

E: The highlight of the APE Con was a man who showed up looking like a Whitesnake/late Black Sabbath years elf, and had an actual fucking sword and lace-up leather mail! [Laughter]

B: I'm a Rockstar, and that's not gettin' me any either, but I don't care 'cause masturbation's always better.

E: It's been said by many people that sex is just a surrogate for masturbation.

M: We just jack-off to comics. [Laughter]

P: I've never jacked off to a comic book.

M&B: [in unison] I've jacked-off to Paul's comic!

P: You did?! Comics are the most un-sexy thing in the world. That's why they don't get you laid.

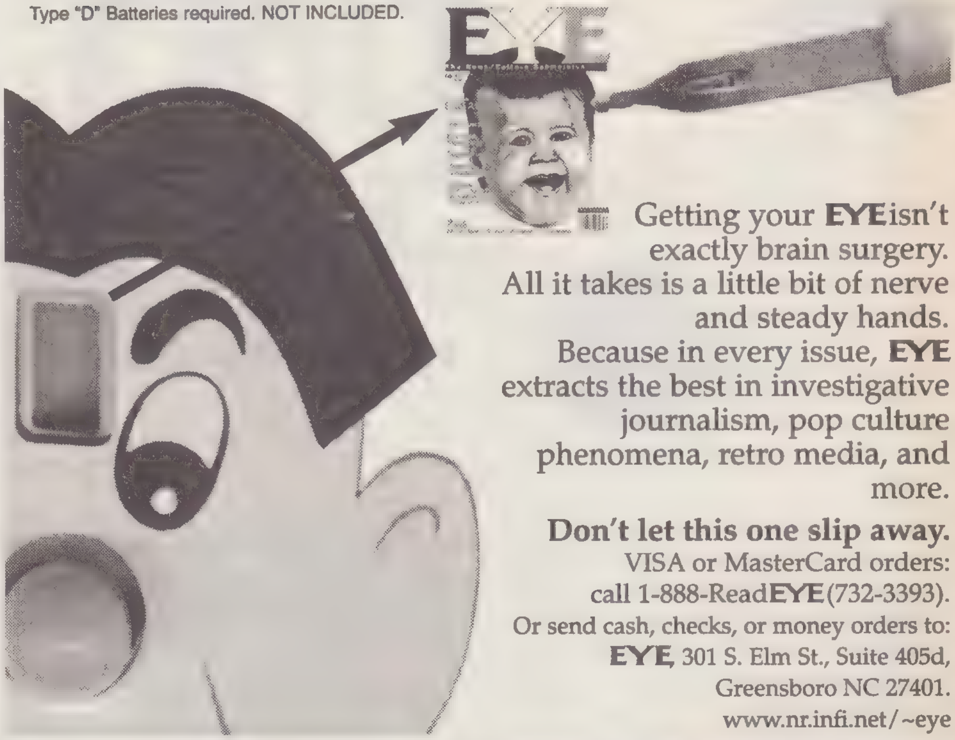
E: You're just not trying hard enough!

P: You could get more girls going to church. Go to a party, take as many drugs as you can, and you'll end up with someone.

Well in addition to that, what are the greatest obstacles you've had to hurdle in forming your own company?

P: Diverting the Klingon fleets. [Laughter]
E: Well the thing is, when I wear my yarmulke in public, people laugh at me, and when I ride my bike with my helmet on, Mormon style, they laugh at me too. That deters me a lot.
B: Deters you from what, getting laid?
Not obstacles in getting laid, obstacles in foraging your own Comic Company. And you're not Jewish *or* Mormon.
M: Actually people are very helpful so it's not so bad. Especially other artists and distributors, and everybody's really friendly, so that makes up for a lot. Otherwise Paul and I both are really retarded with business in general – we're both poor businessmen.
B: I have low self-esteem.
M: Oh yeah, and Bob has low self-esteem!
E: Some guy threw carrots at me once. Frozen carrots.
P: The number one problem is ducat and lack there of.
B: The problem is we need another drink.
Any closing advice for the kiddies who want to be just like you?
E: Jump off a bridge, and if you don't die, that's a good start.
M: Paul's been spouting some pretty dour stuff lately, go ahead Paul.
P: OK, there's no gold ring in the comic industry, so kiddies, you wanna be a rocker – learn the guitar. [Laughter]
B: It *is* just like being in a band, it's the same thing – you're never gonna get signed or any of that shit.
E: We're negative assholes, we've got a bad attitude, and we're all pessimists. Our glasses are half empty.
So you'd *want* to be signed with Marvel or DC?
P: *Now* I would rather work forty hours a week at Carl's Jr. and self-publish my comics and break even, but when I was 11, I wanted to draw the Hulk or something.
B: Everybody did.
P: But now even for a ton of money I wouldn't.
E: Liar! Liar!
P: I really wouldn't be interested. I'd rather work at a toy store.
E: I'd do it, of course! I'm a sell-out. Contact me: dot com com slash com.
You're looking for a wealthy patron to buy your soul?
E: Just buy my drinks and you can have my soul for free.
B: [belches]
M: My advice is to get into something other than comics. Divert your interest somewhere else.
So you're not fulfilled?
M: I am, but it's such an inbred art-form.
P: I have a vision of how all my future projects will look, I wanna do them the way I want, every page, but I don't expect to make a living off of it.
B: Don't expect that, but if you wanna do it, you should, because it's good to get stuff out there.
M: No one's gonna to kill you for putting out a bad comic.
E: The more chum you throw in the water, the more sharks come 'round.
Huh?
E: And no one in the room is currently wearing a helmet, correct?

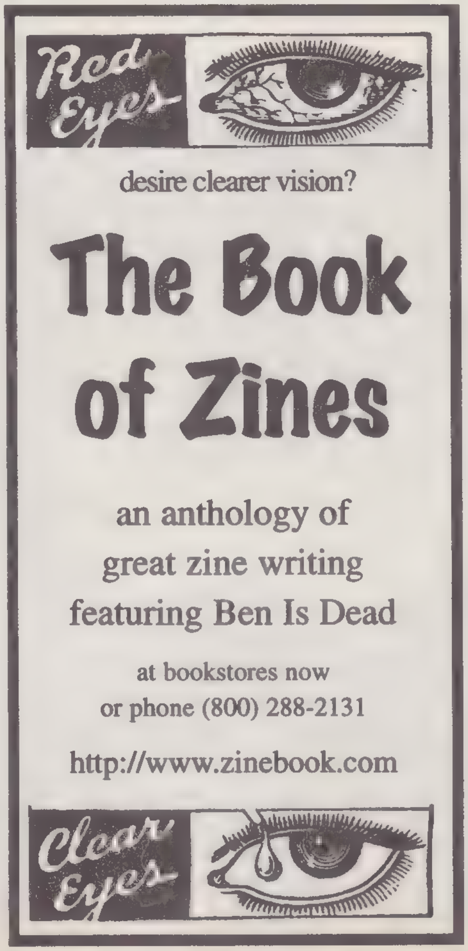
If you have any questions, comments, complaints, cocktail recipies, or would like a free catalog: write to the Zoo Arsonist Press at POBox 6322, San Pedro, CA 90734.


Take out **EYE** subscription
(Sample, $3.95 ... 6-issue subscription, $14)

Type "D" Batteries required. NOT INCLUDED.

Getting your **EYE** isn't exactly brain surgery. All it takes is a little bit of nerve and steady hands. Because in every issue, **EYE** extracts the best in investigative journalism, pop culture phenomena, retro media, and more.

Don't let this one slip away.
VISA or MasterCard orders:
call 1-888-Read**EYE**(732-3393).
Or send cash, checks, or money orders to:
EYE, 301 S. Elm St., Suite 405d,
Greensboro NC 27401.
www.nr.infi.net/~eye


Red Eyes

desire clearer vision?

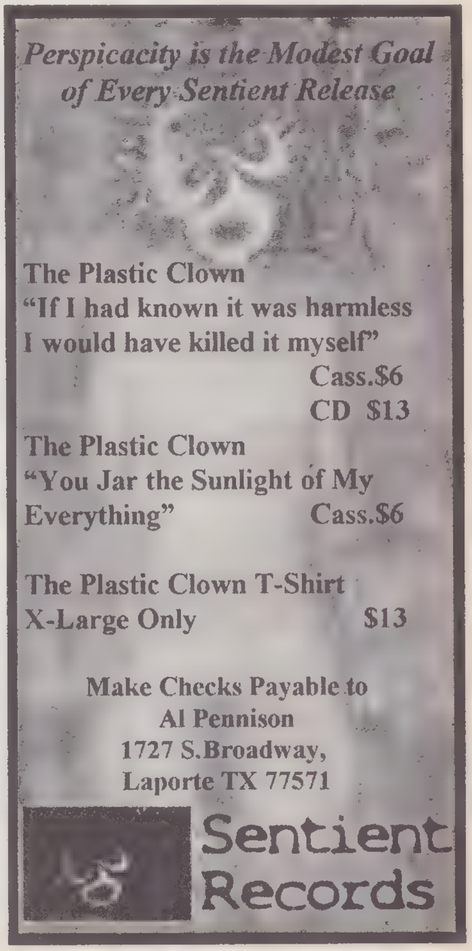
The Book of Zines

an anthology of great zine writing featuring Ben Is Dead

at bookstores now
or phone (800) 288-2131

http://www.zinebook.com

Clear Eyes


Perspicacity is the Modest Goal of Every Sentient Release

The Plastic Clown
"If I had known it was harmless I would have killed it myself"
Cass.$6
CD $13

The Plastic Clown
"You Jar the Sunlight of My Everything" Cass.$6

The Plastic Clown T-Shirt
X-Large Only $13

Make Checks Payable to
Al Pennison
1727 S.Broadway,
Laporte TX 77571

Sentient Records

seely

seconds

beggars banquet

BEGGARS BANQUET
580 Broadway, Suite 1004, NYC, NY 10012
beggars@beggars.com http://www.beggars.com
Exclusively Distributed by ADA

The New MAD MONGELL CD

RAMEN & ROLL! / FAR WESTERN PUNK MUSIC

ON SALE NOW! $800

TO ORDER, SEND CASH,
CHECK, OR MONEY ORDER TO:

BLOSSOM
369-B THIRD STREET, #320
SAN RAFAEL, CA. 94901 USA

TAX: CA. RESIDENTS PLEASE ADD 8.25%
SHIPPING: INCLUDED
FOREIGN ORDERS, ADD $2.00

CALL OR WRITE FOR FREE CATALOGUE
OF OTHER GREAT JAPANESE ARTISTS!
PHONE#: (415) 257-5514
EMAIL: BLOSSOM@IAC.CO.JP

HORROR•FANTASY•DREAM

H.P. Lovecraft's
THE DREAM-QUEST OF
UNKNOWN KADATH
The Comic Book
•Adapted by Jason Thompson
•Five 24-Page Issues from Mock Man Press
COMING FALL 1997
HTTP://WWW.SONIC.NET/~JASON/

DWARVES
the dwarves are young and good looking CD $10/LP $8
BALLGAGGER
ache CD $10/LP $8
GRIEF
miserably ever after CD $10/ Dbl. LP $10
OUT OF ORDER
eye caramba CD $10/LP $8
PROP 13
change is good CD $10

All items postpaid in the U.S.
Send for a complete catalogue to:
Theologian Records pob 1070
Hermosa Beach, CA 90254
Visit us online at...
http://theologianrecords.com

theologian RECORDS

PESSIMISER · THEOLOGIAN
PESSIMISER · THEOLOGIAN

Friends of Lulu

by Lorraine

The way I actually heard of *Friends of Lulu* was when I asked the guys from the *Zoo Arsonist Press* why the comic industry seems to be such a Good Old Boys network. They told me that Friends of Lulu is for women cartoonists, and I was wondering if you could explain exactly what your organization does?

Jackie Estrada: Well, the purpose is to get more women involved in comics, both as consumers, creators, retailers, and all aspects of the business and creative part of it. The membership is not limited to professionals, and it's not limited to females – anybody can join.

So that's where the revenue comes from, from membership dues?

That's the main source of revenue. We get some donations, we do a little bit of fundraising at conventions, we sell t-shirts, we sell buttons. If we have a specific event we're doing we get sponsors for it, but membership is so far our main source of income.

So who are some of your members? You mentioned professionals, anyone that we've heard of?

Well, lots of people are members, like Neil Gaiman, Peter David, Trina Robbins... I mean the full gamut of people, starting with under age eighteen, Junior Lulus.

Is it the Little Lulu character?

The person who came up with the name originally is Heidi McDonald, who I consider to be the founder of *Friends of Lulu.* Little Lulu was always a very independent little girl, and one of her ongoing battles was that the boys had their boys' club and no girls were allowed in it.

Jerks

Our newsletter is called Lulu's Clubhouse, and our logo purposely says, "Boys Allowed."

Because girls're much bigger people than that.

We consider this to be an inclusive organization rather than an exclusive organization. One of the things that we've noticed is that if you look at regular book publishing, the greatest number of book purchasers and readers are females. But when you look at the comic book marketplace, you're lucky if female readership is in the five to ten percent range, and that was not always the case. If you look back in the '40s and '50s, you get different statistics. At one point, half of the comics readers were female. There were lots and lots of different genres of comics that adults and kids read, from crime and romance, to humor, fantasy, and horror. Superhero was not a big genre.

Do you think it was because of Superheroes that these demographics changed?

Yes, definitely. What happened was that the places to sell comics shrunk, because in the '60s and '70s comics were sold primarily on newsstands and at 7-11's. Well, newsstands a lot of times wouldn't even put the comics out. They would rip the covers off and send them back without even putting them on the racks because they were such low ticket items that it wasn't worth the space. To put a magazine out that was worth a couple of bucks, and to put out a comic that was twelve cents, the stand wasn't going to make that much money on it. When the idea of the direct comic book market happened, where comic companies could sell their comics directly to shops that specialized in comics, that audience at the time was primarily collectors, and those collectors tended to be primarily male. At first the comic companies that kind of dabbled in this were thinking, "Our main way to get comics out there in the world is through newsstands and through 7-11's, but we'll send some out to these stores too." It evolved in the early '80s, as 7-11 started having video games that were more profitable than the comics rack, and as newsstands continued to ignore comics, the proportion of the income for the comics companies from these comics stores got bigger and bigger, and as it did so, they started to target things to that particular market. So instead of doing all these different kinds of genres that anybody might want to pick up, from little kids to adults, they found that what was selling well in these shops was Superheroes. Although there have been anomalies, when you have things that sell really well like *Sandman*, which was a kind of a fantasy-horror type topic, but foremostly Superheroes are what sold, so they just kept becoming more and more insular to this one audience. They also made the mistake of deciding that the audience was teenage boys. Then it became an even more specialized Superhero audience because it was Superheroes with girls in skimpy outfits as a thing to get the kid to pick up the cover. There has continued to be a lot of good material done as graphic narrative, or whatever term you want to use, but it's getting harder for a general reader who might enjoy it to even know it exists or have access to it. That's one of the things that we want to try to do, is come up with other ways to get the existing stores to realize that there's a wider audience out there that they ought to be trying to get into their doorways and sell them stuff besides Superheroes, or else get attention to this stuff enough so that it can get out there in other kinds of venues.

So how does *Friends of Lulu* accomplish this? Phone solicitations, flyers, what?

Well, one of the things we did in conjunction with Diamond Comic Distributors was a catalog called *Friends of Lulu Suggests*, and this is basically graphic novels and comics that somebody who's a real comic fanatic might get for their mom, their sister, their girlfriend, their wife, to get them interested in comics. It's like, "Make someone you love, love what you love." So it's more accessible type things of all kinds of genres, from Roberta Gregory's *Naughty Bits* to some Superhero stuff to *Elfquest* to *Sandman.* There's something like 300 items in this catalog, which was given out free. It was pretty much targeted to the regular comic fan who wants to get the non-fan interested, and needs to know where to start, because if you go in the store, there's five million things on the shelf. The catalog is an ongoing thing that's always available. They revise it every year. We're also doing a handbook for retailers called, *How to Get Girls (In Your Store)*, and it's going to be distributed free to every comic shop owner in the country, and it's just a little pamphlet with sections on window display, store layout, mix of product, promotional ideas, all kinds of things that would help a retailer actually act like a retailer, and not like a boys' club. So, I don't know how receptive they'll be to this, but it's one way we're trying to get the existing stores to go after a bigger audience.

Friends of
Lulu
SUGGESTS
SUPER COOL COMICS
Super Cool Gift Ideas as
Recommended by Friends of Lulu!

That's a pretty large spoonful. How many people work at *Friends of Lulu*?

Friends of Lulu is a non-profit charitable corporation based in San Diego. We have a seven person board of directors. It's all volunteer. We have committees that do various things, local chapters in New York, San Francisco bay area, Los Angeles, one starting in Texas, one starting in North Carolina, and we're trying to do things on a national level, but also things on a local level.

Are these people mostly female?

Most of them are women. We have some active men, particularly in the San Francisco chapter. We had our first Friends of Lulu conference in February in San Jose that was done by the Bay Area chapter. The president of the New York chapter is a guy. It includes people who are professionals in the field, but also includes fans and people who agree with the goals, and want to do something. We have lots of members that all they do is send in their twenty-five dollars, and that's their contribution, but there are others who want to be more actively involved.

Do you actually sponsor artists, or is it mainly just to get the word out?

One thing we're doing is putting together a directory of female professionals. You don't have to be a member to be in the directory, but it'll indicate if they're a writer, artist, colorist, editor, or whatever their particular expertise is, and this can be used for referrals, networking.

Does this go to all the stores like the other things?

This has to be requested because the people listed in it want the information not to get out there to just the regular fans and public. If somebody calls me up and says, "I'm looking for somebody who's a water-colorist who could do trading cards along the lines of *Magic the Gathering*, do you have anybody you'd recommend?" I can open up my booklet and say, "Well, it says here that Amanda Connor does watercolor and specializes in fantasy. Here's her contact information." So that's another project we've just sent out, started to circulate the questionnaires, to gather the material. We'll have an electronic

version and a print version.

How long has the organization been in existence?

Well, we got our non-profit status in '95, and the very first meeting where the idea was just kicked around was in 1993. It's fairly new.

So you seem to know an awful lot about comics, who are some more successful women comic artists?

Jill Thompson is a real mainstream comics artist who has worked for DC and has her own project coming out this fall. Amanda Conner draws *Vampirella*. Trina Robbins is probably the most visible though, she's written a couple of books about female cartoonists and female characters in comics. She's from the San Francisco bay area, and was one of the people involved at the beginning of the underground comic scene.

What year was that?

Back in the '60s. She's drawn *Wonder Woman*. She does slide shows and travels around the world talking about female cartoonists and female characters and has researched back to the turn of the century female cartoonists in this country. As far as ones that are ongoing, doing their own thing, Wendy Pini, who does *Elfquest*, is going on her 25th anniversary for that strip.

Have any women broken into the "underground comics market"?

Well, there are a lot of women. For instance, Aline Kominsky, who's married to Robert Crumb, has done her own comics for twentysome years, and also was involved in the *Twisted Sisters* collection. There's been a couple of book collections and then a series of periodicals that she's put together. Donna Barr's been doing her comic, *Desert Peach*, for ten years. Roberta Gregory has been doing her stuff for twenty years.

What about some newer artists?

Well, there's a gal named Jessica Abel who does a comic called *Art Babe*, whose now on Fantagraphics, and Debbie Drechsler has a comic called *Nowhere*. She's up for a couple of Eisner awards.

What is an Eisner award?

The Eisner is like the Oscar of the comics industry. Those are given out at the San Diego convention.

Are they monetary?

It's like a plaque type thing, and there are 28 categories in which the awards are given for best writer, best artist, best comic, best graphic novel, that sort of thing.

Is this the kind of award that you apply for?

Publishers submit the material and a blue ribbon committee chooses the nominees. Then it's voted on throughout the comics industry by publishers, editors, writers, artists and other creative people, distributors and retailers. Something like 5,000 ballots go out. This year there were more women nominated than ever in the history of the awards. Debbie Drechsler was one. Carol Lay, who does a weekly syndicated strip called *Story Minute*, was another. She has a couple collections of her strips, including one called *Joyride*, that was also nominated for a Harvey award. Harvey is another comics industry award.

The same plaque deal?

Yes, those were given out at Wondercon in Oakland in April. Other women who were nominated for Eisners included Linda Medley for her graphic novel *Castle Waiting*, and Katheryn Hyatt for her book *Marilyn*.

Do you know of any scholarships for comic artists or grants that you can apply for?

There is one grant program offered by Peter Laird (of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* fame) called the Xeric grant for self-published comics. The only scholarship I know of is from the Joe Kubert school in New Jersey, which is a school for comic art. Jan Duursema is a comics artist who went there, I don't know if she was on scholarship.

What are some struggles for women comic artists today as opposed to their struggles in the past?

Well, the biggest struggle now is that the comics industry has shrunk so much that it's hard for anybody. It's competing against veteran male and female artists who are all looking for work at the same time. A lot of companies have gone out of business, and the ones who are still there are doing fewer projects and paying less. I would say that the biggest problem is that women don't realize that it's a career choice. Guys grow up reading comics, and a lot of them think, "This is something I want to do," while girls don't grow up reading comics and don't even think of it.

When I was little, it never occurred to me to want to read comics, so I'm glad that your organization exists now.

Somebody who is also doing pretty well is Stephanie Gladden, doing stuff for *The Simpsons*. She's got her own strip that she's launching that's funny-animal, really cute stuff. I don't have a list at my fingertips of people who are doing things, but there's ones that have been around a long time that are still plugging away, and there are things like *Action Girl*, that Sarah Dyer puts out regularly. There are lot of people who self-publish their own mini comics; there's definitely a whole mini-comics scene for girls.

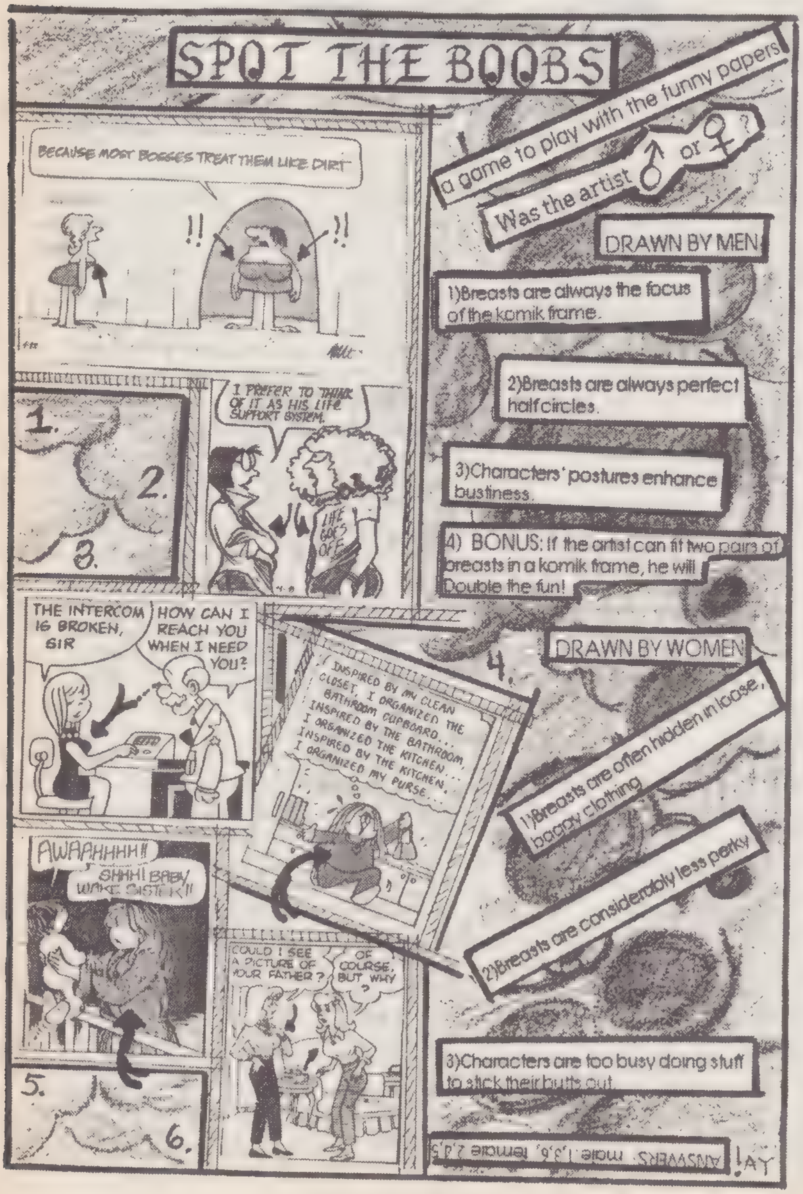
Is that 'grrrl' with three r's?

[Laughs] Well, people like Ariel Bordeaux and Megan Kelso. There's a couple of gals in Chicago that do a really nice publication called *Manya*. Sometimes you just have to travel around the country and go places to see work that you can't find anywhere else.

What's the ultimate goal of the Friends of Lulu? What would you like to see happen in the comic world?

We would like to see comics be a more general, accesible medium and means of expression, for more people to realize the incredible versatility it has as a creative medium, and have a bigger consumer base so that more things can find their way into the readership, whether they're created by men or women. If the comics industry is healthy, there will be more female creators and more female readers, publishers…more females in every aspect. As long as it's limping along and barely staying alive, it's not going to be viable for anybody. Basically, we want to see the good stuff live and the bad stuff die.

For Information on Friends of Lulu write to: 4657 Cajon Way, San Diego, Ca 92115.


SPOT THE BOOBS
a game to play with the funny papers
Was the artist ♂ or ♀?
DRAWN BY MEN
1)Breasts are always the focus of the komik frame.
2)Breasts are always perfect half circles.
3)Characters' postures enhance bustiness.
4) BONUS: If the artist can fit two pairs of breasts in a komik frame, he will Double the fun!
DRAWN BY WOMEN
1)Breasts are often hidden in loose, baggy clothing
2)Breasts are considerably less perky
3)Characters are too busy doing stuff to stick their butts out
BECAUSE MOST BOSSES TREAT THEM LIKE DIRT
!!
!!
1.
2.
3.
I PREFER TO THINK OF IT AS HIS LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEM.
LIFE GOES OFF
THE INTERCOM IS BROKEN, SIR
HOW CAN I REACH YOU WHEN I NEED YOU?
4.
INSPIRED BY AN CLEAN CLOSET, I ORGANIZED THE BATHROOM CUPBOARD... INSPIRED BY THE BATHROOM, I ORGANIZED THE KITCHEN... INSPIRED BY THE KITCHEN, I ORGANIZED MY PURSE.
AWAAHHHH!!
SHHH! BABY WAKE SISTER!!
COULD I SEE A PICTURE OF YOUR FATHER?
OF COURSE, BUT WHY?
5.
6.
ANSWERS: male 1,3,6, female 2,4,5
AY

Xeric grants

BY RYAN BIGGE

All week Darby has complaining about the Xeric Foundation. Not that she's against the financial assistance they provide to comic book artists, she's just jealous that no one is offering anyone in the zine community five grand.

Even if you count the money earned from selling promotional CDs to pawn shops (not that *Ben is Dead* would ever stoop to this) and ad revenue (which is non-existent in most independent comics) we're still getting shafted. Granted, if you struggle away at a quality zine long enough, there's always the possibility of a book deal. But that's hardly incentive nor encouragement for those just beginning to dabble in zinedom.

Darby thinks *Rolling Stone* (which began as a zine) should be doing something like that for the world of self-publishing. Unfortunately, the best *Rolling Stone* has been able to offer the community is an advertising section for zines so hideously overpriced ($2,904 for a 2x2.5" ad in their Zine Scene section of the 1996's Year End Double Issue) that no zinester in the world was able to afford it.

So unless R. Seth Friedman finds a way to sell a screen treatment of *Factsheet Five*, or *Beer Frame's* Paul Lukas becomes a talk show host, the zine community will continue to be without a sugardaddy.

The man responsible for launching a thousand panels is none other than Peter Laird of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* fame. Peter made a few dollars on the whole *TMNT* phenom and decided to establish the Xeric Foundation which makes twice yearly payouts to deserving comic book people. About ten worthy souls per annum are given a proverbial suitcase full of small, unmarked bills after submitting a budget and a nearly completed comic for consideration. In exchange, winners have to agree to self-publish their comic within a year of receiving the grant.

Eric Reynolds from Fantagraphics Books, who by his own admission is quick to find fault in many things, thinks the Xeric grants are good for everybody concerned. Reynolds notes that *TMNT* co-creator Kevin Eastman tried a similar act of philanthropy for the comic community by forming a publishing house called Tundra. Unlike the controlled benevolence of Laird, Tundra was a fiasco, losing four million dollars and creating a great deal of bad blood between everyone involved.

Despite this praise, Reynolds has noticed a gradual decrease in the quality of Xeric grant awardees since its inception in 1992. He believes this is due to the simple fact that there is a finite supply of gifted comic artists that aren't already being published. Eric notes that "Without naming names, some Xeric grant winners seem like one trick ponies that won't go past their first issue."

Despite the financial boost, it still rests upon the individual artist to make the most of their opportunity. Out of the 50 winners thus far, only a few have parlayed their nest egg into success in real terms. Eric notes that winners such as Adrian Tomine (*Optic Nerve*, Sept. 1993), Jason Lutes (*Jar of Fools*, Sept. 1993) and Jessica Abel (*Artbabe*, Sept. 1995) were able to get more exposure and build momentum which eventually led them to publishers Drawn & Quarterly, Blackeye, and Fantagraphics respectively.

Jeff Mason of Alternative Press, Inc. believes that Xeric grants, "Carry a hell of a lot of cache value. Xeric winners get a lot of publicity in trade publications and many retailers and fans will pick up a book just because it won a Xeric grant. *Indy* magazine even gives discounts to Xeric grant winners for ad space."

For Ellen Forney, the Xeric grant (March 1997) allowed her to print 3,000 copies of "I was Seven in '75." Despite this windfall, she has had some negative experiences with her pot of gold. What I didn't realize until talking with Ellen is that the grant isn't doled out in one lump sum. Funds are dispersed based on receipts for expenses incurred. This leaves some items up to Xeric discretion, and thus they aren't going to reimburse Ellen for an ISBN number ($175 plus 10 bucks for a bar code) without which many distributors won't even consider taking her on. Despite the lofty goals of the Xeric grant, Ellen believes these policies hamper what recipients can do with their comic.

She believes that distribution is an integral part of what it takes to do this project well, and "If the Xeric Foundation isn't going to support that, then it's counter-productive. I know more than one grant winner stuck with stacks of books that they ended up making furniture with, simply because they don't have the support or resources to distribute their comic like it could or should be. I've been lucky since I have some friends in the industry and friends in the comic world. But people living in the middle of Buttfuck, Idaho may not have access to the same resources. I would like to see Xeric give a bit more assistance to their recipients and their marketing efforts."

As well, Ellen wishes that the Xeric Foundation publicized themselves more. She doesn't believe the decreasing quality of Xeric winners is an inevitable occurrence if more people knew about the grant.

She concluded on a somewhat positive note. "The cool thing about this project is that you're given total control over your comic, yet you're not laying out thousands of dollars in exchange for that control. But given some of the restrictions, it's a boon and a burden."

Adrian Tomine and I bashed heads for a bit over the Xeric as well. For him, the experience was nothing but positive. "I think the best thing it did was give me some visibility. People had sort of heard my name, but this helped to really get me better known."

Adrian encountered fewer problems with distribution. "I had some experience in self-publishing (six mini-comics) before getting the Xeric grant which helped me a lot. I budgeted for distribution expenses like ads in *The Comics Journal*, as well as some posters and postcards. I used a distributor named Capital – which is now out of business, probably for taking chances on comics like mine – as well as Last Gasp. I ended up selling a couple of thousand through them. I also had a small base of distribution through Tower Records."

He notes that being greedy often pays off. "I got and used the $5,000 maximum. I talked to other people who had already won before I put my proposal together. They told me to ask for as much as I thought I could really use, and that the real deciding factor was whether or not the Xeric committee liked my work. My advice is not to cut costs to make your proposal look enticing, but make a budget based on what you actually need."

"I'd really encourage people to take advantage of the grant. It's free money that if you don't take, some lessor artist will, since they give out the grants no matter what. I think part of the problem is the mystique surrounding it. There are some good artists out there who don't know about it or don't think they'll qualify."

Jessica Abel was able to print 5,000 copies of *Artbabe* with her Xeric grant. Despite talking to Adrian beforehand, she admits it was a bit of trial by fire when it came to the distribution and promotion end of things. "I didn't do a really great job with my proposal. I ended up writing a grant for some advertising, some copy costs and printing the book. I ended up doing direct mail instead of advertising, but they don't penalize you if you do things slightly different. I also ended up paying for some things out of my own pocket."

However, winning the Xeric didn't grant her instant success with Fantagraphics. "The people there didn't look at my comic and go 'Hey, this is Xeric sponsored, we should publish her.' A lot of people at Fantagraphics knew my mini-comic work and liked it, but the main guys couldn't seem to remember my name. I'd been reviewed in *The Comics Journal* and such, so people in the comic community knew about me, so the grant didn't suddenly generate momentum or recognition. What did happen was that my Xeric sponsored comic was leaps and bounds above what I'd done before. What the grant ended up doing was to force me to put out a professionally published and produced comic. The grant made a big difference artistically because I was spending money on it, I was doing distribution in a more traditional way and so the stakes were higher. I thought to myself, 'I have to do this right, it really matters if I draw well and do the stories well.' It gave me a kick in the pants since I'd been doing self-publishing for five years."

For any prospective Xeric applicants, Jessica emphasized planning ahead, especially for distribution, since distributors need three months notice so your comic will appear in the catalogues at the same time as your comic is ready to ship.

Jessica was also in agreement with Eric Reynolds in that the Xeric Foundation needs to raise the quality of recent winners. She wondered if an established artist like Chris Ware would be allowed to get a grant if he promised to self-publish it. She doesn't see why that couldn't be part of the Xeric mission.

Unlike most Xeric winners, Jon Lewis (September 1993) was able to print not one but three issues of his comic *True Swamp*. He did 5,000 copies of his first issue and 3,000 copies of issue two and three.

Jon tried other routes before applying for the Xeric. "I had showed my stuff to some publishers but they thought it was high risk and felt it would be a hard sell. With the Xeric grant, my stuff received exposure. It was also a way to put it out there with no considerations and see what it would do. So when it acquired a following, it showed it was worth doing." After his third issue of *True Swamp*, Jon joined the Slave Labor Graphics team.

Like many Xeric winners, he talked to previous winners (in this case Megan Kelso and David Lasky) and borrowed a grant proposal from them for hints. He too believes that there's nothing wrong with asking for as much as you think you can use. "I got a little over four thousand dollars, but I could have gotten more if I had valid reasons. I know that Jason Lutes got $6,000 because he wanted to do a very specific production job."

Fred Hofheinz (1997) was awarded $8,500 to print *Paper and Binding*, a full-color comic. Originally he was going to put it out through the Zoo Arsonist Press (which is basically just a buncha Long Beach boys who self-publish with their friends – see interview pg. 62), but according to the Xeric rules, "self-publish" means SELF-publish, so he wasn't allowed the monkey moniker.

Christopher Milne is the Vice President of the Xeric foundation and an all around nice guy. He went into the nuts and bolts of the grants. He makes an important note that the foundation does two things with its funds: Half goes to self-publishing and the other half goes to non-profit groups in Pioneer Valley, located in Western Massachusetts.

Since starting in 1992, it has sizably increased the amount of money it gives out, from $45,000 in the first year to over $100,000 in 1997. Part of the reason for the increase has been the Xeric Foundation's ability to avoid becoming administratively heavy.

I asked him how the Xeric Foundation goes about publicizing itself since this was a complaint of some of the people I spoke with. Christopher noted they advertise in the *Comic Book Buyers Guide* and similar such magazines. As well, an ad this year in *Wizard* dramatically increased submissions.

The foundation was originally funded with a large lump sum by Peter Laird, and since that time it has had additional funding from Laird, "I manage the money and our investments have been doing quite well. The government dictates the minimum percentages of earnings we must give away. As the investments grow, we'll be able to give away more money."

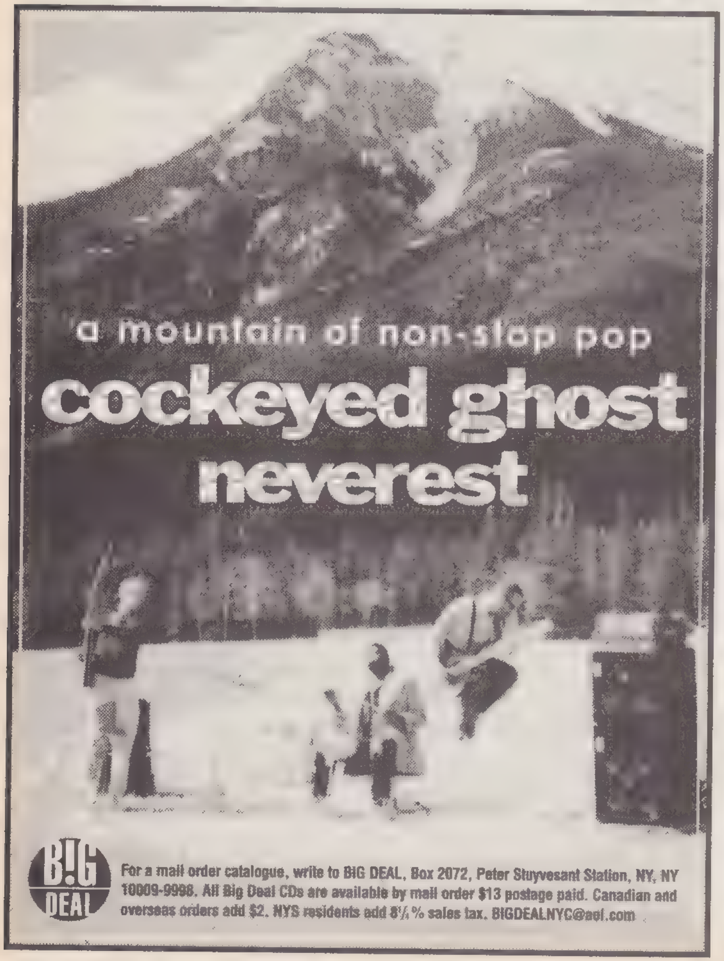
I asked him if getting more money sets up a dichotomy between giving less people more money or giving more people less money. "Every single time we judge proposals, that particular group of proposals is critiqued against that group. No criteria is carried over from the previous group of winners. In some groups we might get requests for lots more money and we might decide to award them those requests. The Xeric grants are ultimately given based on the merit of the artist. People aren't judging proposals with the idea that 'we only want to give them five grand each.' It's based on the merits of the work."

Kendall Clark Engelman is the Grants Administrator. She answered a final few queries of mine. She backed up Jessica Abel's assumption by saying "Any U.S. creator may apply and will be considered for a grant no matter what their background. However, creators just getting started will likely receive preference."

As well, she confirmed that the Xeric Foundation is working on a how-to guide, but is depending largely on feedback from past recipients – feedback which isn't always provided. At present, the Xeric Foundation refers people to Dave Sim's *Cerebus Guide to Self-Publishing.*

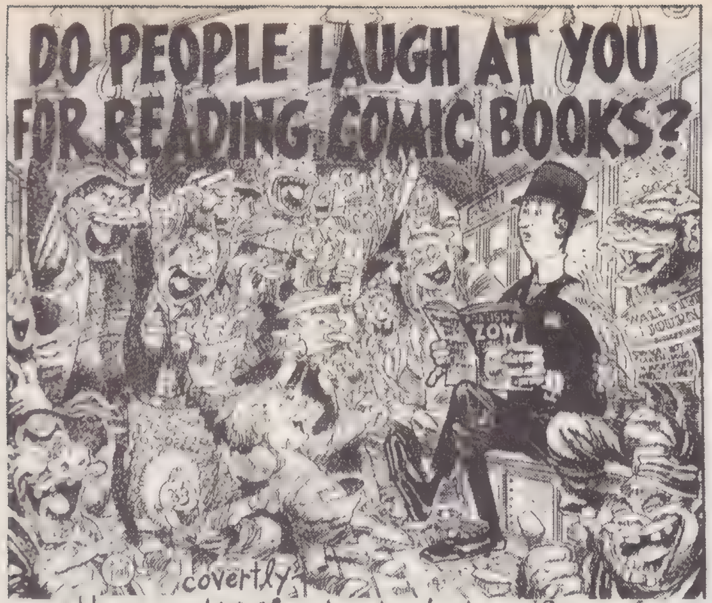
So, if you meet the Xeric qualities of "originality, literary, and artistic merit, and a sense of commitment to the work," apply. You could be the next Peter Bagge, Adrian Tomine or Robert Crumb with a little encouragement and cash-ola.

Write to the Xeric Foundation, 351 Pleasant Street, #214, Northampton, Massachusetts 01060. Phone 413-585-0671 or fax 413-584-3561. Email <xericgrant@aol.com> Bebe Williams' site has information and links at <www.artcomic.com>



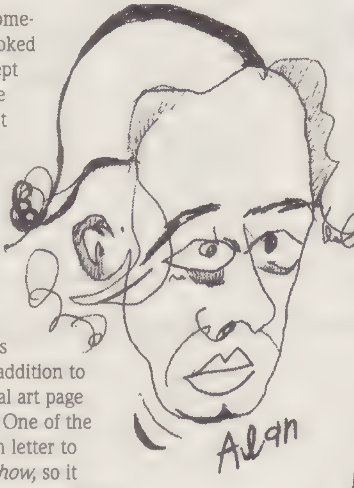
For a mail order catalogue, write to BIG DEAL, Box 2072, Peter Stuyvesant Station, NY, NY 10009-9998. All Big Deal CDs are available by mail order $13 postage paid. Canadian and overseas orders add $2. NYS residents add 8¼% sales tax. BIGDEALNYC@aol.com

DO PEOPLE LAUGH AT YOU FOR READING COMIC BOOKS?



Written and covertly illustrated by Lorraine

I had come across a flier for the **Lines On Paper Comic Book Appreciation Society**, so I phoned and had them send me more information. I received a newsletter of sorts that had some news, reviews, issues, and history of comics, along with some snippets, coupons, and an outline of the noble L.O.P. goals and beliefs. Their printed matter proclaimed that by attending their meetings I could “find out about what comics you should be reading” and “what to show your friends when you think they’re ready to read comics” as well as “learn page turning and other valuable tips”, so I decided to venture out – I’m such an easy target for propagandizers.



Upon arriving, they offered me homemade cookies, and though these four men looked exactly like the ones I was taught not to accept sweets from, my craving for chocolate got the best of me (I woulda been such an easy target for kidnapping perverts). Alan Swink started the meeting by passing around his new *Li’l Abner* anthology, and discussion ensued about how Daisy Mae was drawn much sexier in the strip’s beginning. When the book was passed to me, I dutifully flipped through the pages; yup, no disagreement here on the sexiness of Daisy Mae. Next Rod started show and tell from the past weekend’s trip to the San Diego Comic Convention. In addition to his stack of comics, he’d purchased an original art page from Adrian Tomine’s *Optic Nerve* for $150. One of the club’s non-present members had written a fan letter to Joe Matt that was printed in the latest *Peepshow*, so it was proudly read aloud. When they started to discuss *Akira*, I furtively snatched Dame Darcy’s newest *Meat Cake* (that Rod had brought back from the Con) and read it until they changed the subject.

Even though there were only five of us in attendance tonight, they regaled me with tales of the one hundred and seven people crammed into the sixty person capacity room when Robert Williams was the guest speaker. They briefly talked about their next speaker, French artist Jean Marc L’Officier who is slated to talk about French comics, and Gary wondered if might not more people attend if he lectured on horror comics instead (L’Officier’s other area of expertise).

The group is in strong support of comics as a vital means of self expression and “believe that comics are meant to be read, not hermetically sealed and stored in vaults.” They’re concerned about the future of the industry and advocate comics that are a little less mainstream than *Superman,* and “promote artists whose work stretches the boundaries of the form” by getting work out there. I asked them *why* this was important to them, and while they were expounding into my tape recorder, I covertly sketched their portraits under the guise of taking copious notes while nodding affirmatively at the proper junctures.

Gary Cifra: Well for me comics, especially alternative comics, were really important in my life when I was growing up in the 1950s. When I ran across *Mad Magazine* (back when it was a comic book), it literally changed my life forever because all of a sudden I could see that Wow! there’re people making fun of the establishment, of our parents, of things that I read in school, and it helped me sort of step outside and not just fall in line. I realized that people *can* be irreverent towards all those things. I think it’s really good for kids to be exposed to these ideas – that you can say whatever you want in these kind of comics.

Mike Lefedre: I think that in a way, comics is kind of a marginal genre that hasn’t been beaten to death with criticism, that hasn’t been defined to death to the point where everyone expects it to be a certain way or a certain thing. There’s a wide open area for creativity in alternative comics.

Rod Mullinax: Once you’ve read some examples of alternative comics, you see the potential that the medium has, to serve for personal expression for the individual, to get ideas out there, an artistic vehicle that has all these possibilities that some people are beginning to realize, and the idea for me is to share something that I think is artistic, personal, and can open your eyes about different things.

Mike: I’m here for access to stuff that I might not otherwise be exposed to, that I don’t have time to look for, because until I found this group, it would just be when I had the time, I’d go to certain comic book shops and root around in quite a few things, and here I get access to all this stuff that otherwise I wouldn’t know about.

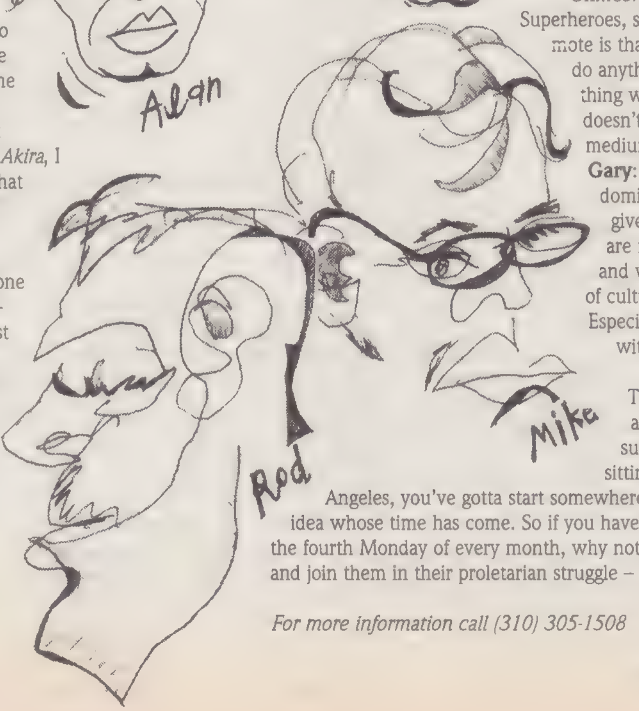
Gary: Yeah, I go to Hi De Ho Comics once a week, and every month Rod has a bunch of stuff that I never got a chance to see, but I can’t go twice a week.

Rod: That’s a funny thing about the economics of the situation too, that because the retailers do not perceive a large market for this type of material, they order limited quantities, therefore if you go to the store and try to find it, sometimes it’s sold out and you may never see it unless you’re really on top of things, which is unfortunate.

Gary: That’s true, like *Zero Zero*, if you don’t get it in the first week, you miss it.

Mike: I think it’s the nature of the medium right now that you don’t know if some things come out monthly, or once every three months, or once a year, or a couple issues will come out and you’ll wonder if it’s disappeared off the face of the Earth – it’s very difficult to keep up on it by yourself.

Rod: So as a group, together we can keep track of what’s happening with things and share our insights and at least be made aware of what materials are out there that might be interesting to us. Sophisticated people who have wide-ranging interests are like, “Oh...*comics.*” And they immediately think Superheroes, so part of the idea that we want to promote is that comics is just a medium – you can do anything with it the way you could do anything with a short story or in a movie; it doesn’t represent a certain genre, it’s just a medium.



Gary: We’re really trying to subvert the dominant paradigm, there are certain givens within our culture: comic books are for kids and are not a serious thing, and when you question basic foundations of culture, it’s a hard thing to break down. Especially with what Hollywood’s doing with all these comic book movies?

Though I wasn’t quite convinced that any dominant paradigms were being subverted by the handful of white males sitting in the Venice Public Library in Los Angeles, you’ve gotta start somewhere, and sharing comix is definitely an idea whose time has come. So if you have nothing better to do at 6:00p.m. on the fourth Monday of every month, why not bring a comic book for show and tell and join them in their proletarian struggle – there’ll be cookies...

For more information call (310) 305-1508

MIKE DIANA

Mike Diana won't be spending time with the Supreme Court any time soon. Though he's been fighting for years to get his case heard, it's not going to happen – at least not this year. Diana, an artist famous for being charged with obsenity in the conservative courts of Miami, is still on probation for work printed in his self-published comic *Boiled Angel.* We talk to him almost seven years after our first interview with him appeared in our "Gross" issue, when he was just starting to have legal problems, becoming a suspect in the Gainsville murders in Florida because he drew images about the killings. Here's an update on the story...

Hi, you sound really low. Is it just because you have a very quiet voice on the phone?
Yeah, especially now – I'm real sad because I just found out the bad news today. I've been on probation for about three months now, I have to send my probation fee, fifty dollars a month, and one-hundred dollars a month towards the two-thousand dollar fine. I think if I just pay them the money, pretty much money is what they're after, they feel like they're punishing me.

As long as they can feel like you're uncomfortable, it's bothering you, and they get a little money out of it...
Yeah, it's nothing new. I've been very used to their harassment for years and years in Florida. I used to always get pulled over when I was riding my bicycle from the grocery store where I worked as a stock boy at after school. The police would pull me over and ask if I was a runaway – while I had my work uniform on!

Unhook me dude! I'm a freshwater Wiggle Woggle, I got a good secret to tell ya!!

So how old were you when this started? Was it the local cops who knew what you were doing and wanted to bother you?
Usually it was different officers. They just like to push their weight around I guess, show all of the teenagers who's boss.

But this is directly related to your art? They'd seen your stuff?
This wasn't even when they knew about the art.

This was just because you had long hair or something? You just looked wrong?
I could be riding home at eleven o'clock at night, and they'd hold me there for half an hour while they ran my name through the computer, always hassling me. One time I was going by the lake and there was a turtle that a car had hit. I picked up the turtle and was putting it in the water, and all of a sudden the cops shined this flashlight on me, "Get out of there, what are you doing? What's that in your hand? Drop it!" They thought it was a bomb or something. Then one said, "That turtle's gonna die anyway, it's already dead. Now get out of that ditch." They called my dad up, and my dad said, "All right, tell him to get home."

Largo's where you grew up? How many people live in Largo?
There must be like 50,000 people there now. It was smaller when I first lived there.

So when did they start harassing you for your artwork?
That was around 1990, after the Gainesville student murders happened. Five students were killed and they were trying to find out who did it, and I had just printed my copy of *Boiled Angel* #6 and sent it out to probably about six people. One day after Christmas shopping with my mom, I went to her house. Two detectives, a man and a woman, were there from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement. They pulled out a copy of *BA* #6 and on the cover was a guy with an erection cutting this girl open and pulling out a fetus. That was based on one of the murders that actually happened; I read about it in the paper. They said, "Because of this, you've become a suspect in the student murders." Then they pulled a magazine out. They had been showing it to kids around the block saying, "Have you seen this magazine around here?" Of course they never let anyone see it, but they pulled it out right in front of my mom and got her all upset. She was like, "Oh, I thought you quit drawing all that stuff!" They told me I had to give a blood sample to clear my name, and I didn't want to, but my mom was freaking out, so I did so they'd leave me alone. One of those officers set up a sting operation by ordering #7 and #8 under a fake name. Two years later, I was charged. The magazines were on file at the state attorney's office for two years, and the prosecuting attorney just came across them by accident in the State Attorney's office and decided he was going to go after me for it. I think they offended him somehow.

You think you're a normal all-American boy? Yeah.

They were coming straight from his brain, and he didn't want anyone to know.
He felt that they'd cause people to actually commit murder and rape; he figured that must be the reason the crime rate's so high in Florida.

So you've been dealing with this for pretty much seven years, in total you've served a weekend in jail, then you've been on probation, and the whole time you've been taking it to higher courts?
Yeah, it's been going to two other courts in Florida. The regular appeals court upheld the conviction, and the second district court of appeals denied the appeal any further, and said the sentence would stand. So, I'm just screwed.

This case spoke for so many that it would've been a great case to win at the Supreme Court level. It just seems like you were going to all these courts in Florida that were able to get away with it, but on the Supreme Court level, I don't think it could have ever made any sense. This seems so quaint and old fashioned in comparison to where the rest of the world is at. It would've been just laughed out of court. There's no way that you could have been proven... What have you been proven, obscene?
Yep.

You're just officially obscene and you can't disprove that now?
It's on my permanent record.

Once the Supreme Court turns it down, can't you appeal again in the following year?
I don't know. Hopefully, I'll find that out. I haven't actually talked to anyone yet. My lawyers haven't gotten ahold of me. I usually hear about what happens from the newspapers.

The Comic Book Legal Defense Fund helped you get a lawyer?
Yeah, they're paying for all of my legal expenses and different funds to get me on probation until the next appeal. They paid a three thousand dollar bond.

What would happen if you didn't have them to help?
I would've found someone to defend me for free, but I don't know if a public defender would've done what the Comic Book Defense Fund has.

Are there other comic book artists in similar situations?
I was the first artist to get in trouble that the Comic Defense Fund ever aided. A couple of other cases are more about comic book store owners who are arrested for adult material or selling adult comics. I think I'm the only artist right now...

So you've been living in New York for a while now?
A year and a month.

I'm confused about the whole concept that they're allowed to search you at any time, and that you're not allowed to create more "obscene" material. It's only in Florida that you're not allowed to do this?
That was part of the original sentence. I heard that a lot of the judges were really shocked to hear the extent of the sentencing itself. I guess some of the other judges thought it was crazy that they could actually search my house for artwork and stuff. They did terminate the condition that I have to stay ten feet away from minors which was originally part of the sentence. I almost got in trouble for that too, because I was working in my

The Comic Book Legal Defense Fund is a non-profit charitable organization (started in 1990 with the donation money left over from defending the clerk who sold "obscene comics" at Friendly Frank's in Illinois). The organization raises funds to pay for legal expenses defending the First Amendment rights of Comic Artists. They financially back their assertion that comic books are entitled to the same Constitutional freedoms as those of any other means of artistic expression. To make a donation or for more information on the CBLDF, call: 800/99-CBLDF or write to POB 693, Northampton, MA 01061, or www.edgeglobal.com/cbldf

Where's the felch? Who took the goddamed felch? –Irate judge during an obscenity trial for *Felch* comix father's convenience store at the time, selling grocery items and beer and cigarettes. This little five-year-old Spanish girl would always come in and buy eggs and milk with food stamps, and she had no change left for a little toy, so I gave her a little plastic toy animal every time I saw her. Then I was convicted and sentenced, and when I went to see my probation officer, he was like, "What's this about you giving out toys to little children?" Then I explained to him, and he was like, "Well, you can't be doing that." Somehow they were watching me. Spying on me.

Creepy.

They got rid of that condition because it was crazy and there was no reason for it.

Because of the artwork you're practically a molester now.

And they think they're going to let go the condition about not creating any more artwork, because even for Florida standards, it's just too crazy.

But you've been making artwork since then, right?

I stopped for a couple of months when I first got on probation. But yeah, now I do.

Considering everything, you could just as easily be tried again for the same exact thing?

If I was in violation of my probation, maybe. I've talked to my lawyer, and I don't think they could actually retry me, but I wouldn't doubt it. I don't feel too safe.

So you just try to stay away from Florida?

My mother and brother still live there. Hopefully I can go back legally to visit them.

Are there things you actually consider obscene in the world? What is your definition of obscene?

Horrors that happen everyday. All those poor kids in the sweatshops being raped and abused. The money the government wastes. I don't think I drew anything obscene when I look at it – nothing that I could see really offending anyone that much.

In real life all that may be obscene, but this is just a representation of life. Like reporting it on the news is a representation – all of a sudden the news is obscene.

Yeah, it's art, and that's what the jury couldn't understand, that it should be considered as art. In the Florida obscenity law, it says that if it's art, then it's okay for it to be obscene, but they were saying that it wasn't art.

Was the jury all older, white, repressed?

My lawyers asked the thirty possible candidates if art should have limits, and all but three said yes – of course those three people didn't make it onto the six person jury. It ended up being *pretty much* the worst jury that I could've had. It wasn't a jury of my peers at all.

Are you upset that this case ended up defining your art as being all about obscenity?

I have to just keep going. It's just going to seem like torture for the next couple of years. I have to go through probation, just because I don't like to feel like I'm in some sort of trouble and have this hanging over my head still. Now I'm actually going to get the psychiatric evaluation and things done so that I won't have to go back to jail in Florida. I'll probably have to worry about it for a couple of years. Any little excuse and they can probably try and extradite me back to Florida to go to jail. If I draw something a year from now, it might cause me trouble.

Are they going to find anything in their psychiatric evaluation? I mean, anyone can be considered crazy; what personality traits do you have where they might be able to say, "This guy is kind of weird?"

I don't think anything.

You think you're a normal all-American boy?

Yeah. I took my first evaluation and spent a lot of time doing the ink-blot test and the written test, and all these crazy questions, like do I hear voices. One of the questions was, do you feel like people are after you? I'm like, yeah, I do. But then I got a chance to read her ten dreams that I had written down because they were nightmares about being tried and jailed and accused of killing the people in Gainesville. The evaluator seemed really sympathetic. She was like, "It seems like this whole trial has traumatized you."

WHY MUST YOU BE SO RUDE!
DON'T BLAME ME! YER THE ONE THAT COOKED THE DAMN SPAGHETTI!
KID FEELS NICE & JUICEY! WHY DON'T YA THROW HIM IN DA BLENDER FER-A FEW MINS. & I'll DRINK HIM DOWN!
SQUEEZ
YOU GET AWAY FROM MY CHILD YOU PIG!! HOW COULD ANYONE SAY SUCH A HORRIBLE THING?! I WANT YOU OUTTA MY HOUSE, NOW!
DON'T TALK TA ME LIKE THAT, BITCH I AIN'T LEAV'N TILL I GET FUCK'N LAID!!
SOCK

And it did?

I guess, in a way. You have to just suffer things like that though. Fighting censorship has given me ulcers worrying about stuff... I'll survive.

Just the idea that they are always keeping tabs on you is enough... Going to more personal topics: has your artwork changed any? I saw your *Worst of Boiled Angel* collection, but what new stuff are you working on now?

I'm doing some acrylic paintings, large and small ones – some of them are as drastic as the *Boiled Angel* drawings, some of them aren't. I want people to be able to hang them on their wall. If they're too gross, no one will.

Are they colorful, like the cover of the book?

Yeah, I like doing things in nice colors. The stuff I'm doing now is prettier, more colorful.

Violent?

Some, but not like stuff I've already drawn.

You seem so calm. Is that what your personality is like?

Yeah, very calm. I don't get too excited. Sometimes in a good way, but I just pretend that I'm not that excited.

Why is that?

I don't know, you'll have to ask the psychiatrist.

Are you still dating Kembra Pfahler [singer for The Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black]**?**

Yeah, I see her every now and then. She might be moving to Los Angeles, so... We'll just see what happens.

So would you be moving here, possibly?

I don't know. Maybe someday if I have to escape from Florida. If they get too close to me here or something.

No one would waste their time with you here.

Yeah, that's what I figure. They probably wouldn't in New York either, but they know where I am right now for probation. I could just sneak off.

Do you think that they're still watching you?

I don't think they're *really* watching me. They find out about new books I publish. Some anonymous person might send it to the prosecutor, some citizens or religious groups who might look through underground magazines and actually order stuff just so they can turn it in to the cops.

That's very nice of them. I'm sure they feel good about that. Do you get a lot of hate mail?

A little bit. A lot of religious pamphlets.

Do you believe in God?

No, not right now. I guess I believe there must be something out there, but I don't believe in the God they mention. I was forced into one: I'm Roman Catholic baptized, and my father's family would all go to church. My dad really believed in God, and I had to pay attention in church. I'd have discussions with my mom, and she'd tell me she wasn't sure if she believed in God. I had a weird feeling about religion and whether or not I wanted to be there, because I'd rather be out playing with my friends and stuff. I'd say, "Oh, God would rather me be out having fun."

Did your mom eventually come to terms with your art?

Yeah, my parents support my freedom and everything.

Your mom and dad are split up now.

Yeah, when I was thirteen.

That's the cause of all the evil. If your parents were really good Christians or whatever, you wouldn't have been riding your bike late at night. You wouldn't have read the newspaper about the murders. You would have thought happy thoughts – of lemon drops and sugarplum fairies, and they wouldn't have had axes in their backs, with blood spurting out.

My life... how it could have been.

Mike Diana's case has again been denied appeal in Florida appellate court as well. According to the terms of his probation (he has two more years) he must pay $2,000 in fines, is required to take a journalism ethics course at his own expense ($600), see a psychiatrist weekly at his own expense, and do eight hours of community service per week; in Florida he is still not allowed to draw.

Diana currently works for Testicle Pressure. *His official distributor is Mike Hunt Publications (773) 927-5008. His originals and posters can be purchased through* www.testicle.com – *unless you are in Florida.*

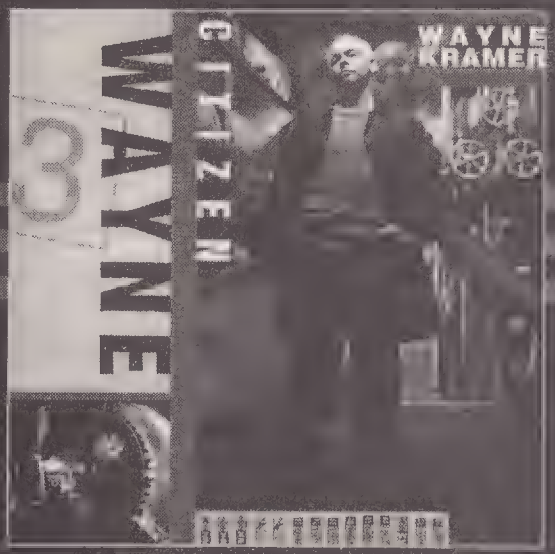
Standards of the Comics Code Authority for editorial matter as originally adopted

Source: Comix, a History of Comic Books in America, by Les Daniels, copyright 1971

EDITED COMPILATION OF GENERAL STANDARDS: Crimes shall never be presented in such a way as to create sympathy for the criminal, to promote distrust of the forces of law and justice, or to inspire others with a desire to imitate criminals. • No comics shall explicitly present the unique details and methods of a crime. • Policemen, judges, government officials, and respected institutions shall never be presented in such a way as to create disrespect for established authority. • If crime is depicted it shall be as a sordid and unpleasant activity. • Criminals shall not be presented so as to be rendered glamorous or to occupy a position which creates the desire for emulation. • In every instance good shall triumph over evil and the criminal punished for his misdeeds. • Scenes of excessive violence shall be prohibited. Scenes of brutal torture, excessive and unnecessary knife and gun play, physical agony, gory and gruesome crime shall be eliminated. • No unique or unusual methods of concealing weapons shall be shown. • Instances of law enforcement officers dying as a result of a criminal's activities should be discouraged. • The crime of kidnapping shall never be portrayed in any detail, nor shall any profit accrue to the abductor or kidnapper. The criminal or the kidnapper must be punished in every case. • The letter of the word "crime" on a comics magazine shall never be appreciably greater than the other words contained in the title. The word "crime" shall never appear alone on a cover. • Restraint in the use of the word "crime" in titles or subtitles shall be exercised. • Females shall be drawn realistically without exaggeration of any physical qualities. • Divorce shall not be treated humorously nor shall be represented as desirable. • Illicit sex relations are neither to be hinted at or portrayed. Violent love scenes as well as sexual abnormalities are unacceptable.

For the full text on the Comics Code see omni@circus.com

WAYNE
KRAMER



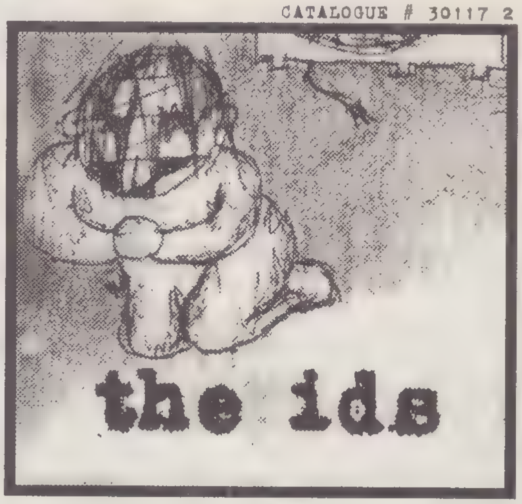
CITIZEN
WAYNE

THE NEW ALBUM FROM WAYNE KRAMER

---

the ids
PSYCHO BABYLON also avaiable on vinyl

CATALOGUE # 30117 2

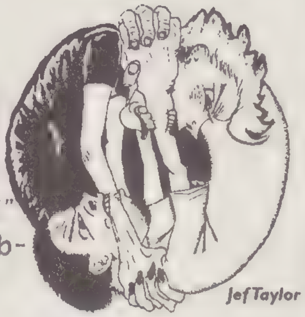


lp/cd

Nettwerk Records Inc., 632 Broadway, Suite 301, New York, NY, U.S.A., 10012. • Tel: (212) 477-8198 • Fax: (212) 477-6874E-Mail: info@nettwerk.com • NettWeb: www.nettwerk.com
For more information contact any of the above addresses.
to order a Nettwerk catalogue call toll free 1-800-764-3472

Lollipop
MAGAZINE
Get your own damn subscription!

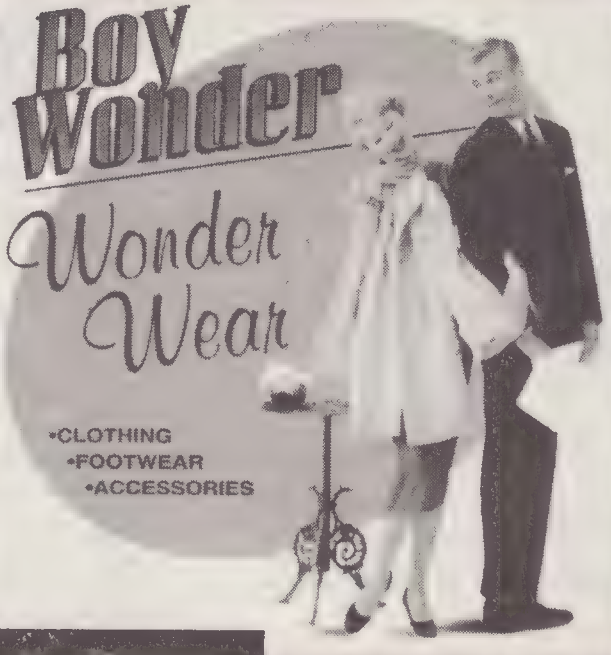
Your choice of any 2 CDs or *Lollipop* "Suck On This!" T-Shirt with every $20 subscription (while supplies last)

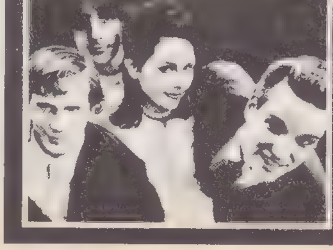


- *Punk-O-Rama Vol-2* (Epitaph)
- *The Flush Sampler* (Fearless)
- *Victory Style II* (Victory)
- *Straightedge As Fuck III* (Desperate Fight)
- *10* Year* Anniversary *Sampler* (ReConstriction)
- *Identity 3D!* (Century Media)
- *Drug Test Two* (Invisible)

Check us out at www.lollipop.com or call (617) 739-0000 extensions 300 and up to hear clips of the music we're calling the cat's meow or the cat's yowl.

LOLLIPOP MAGAZINE
PO BOX 441493
BOSTON, MA 02144

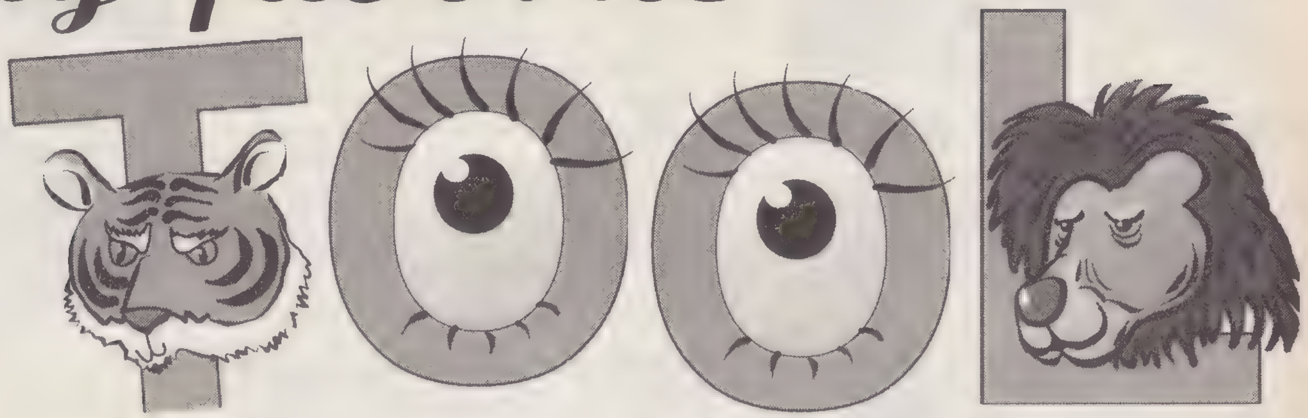




Featuring Paula Kelley of
Drop Nineteens
"Wonder Wear" out on Sept 23rd

CherryDisc
Box 990424 Boston, MA 02199

my favorite Tool



ADRIAN "OPTIC NERVE" TOMINE

Pro White Opaque Paint

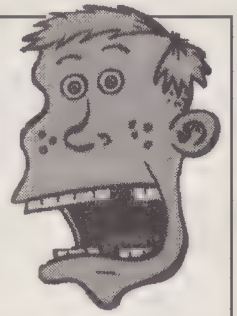
S. CLAY "CHECKERED DEMON" WILSON

A Luger, from W.W.I.

ARIEL "NO LOVE LOST" BORDEAUX

I haven't really been much of a materials snob, but I just started getting into good brushes and I have a Cosmos #3 that I really like a lot. I feel like when I try to draw with a Sharpie it just looks sooo bad.

ERIC "SLIME" REYNOLDS



I don't know if it's *the* most important tool I use, but my favorite tool is probably my Winsor-Newton Series 7 #2 brush made of the finest sable on Earth. It makes lines more black and smooth than Isaac Hayes. After that, in no particular order and depending on my mood, I'd say cigarettes, coffee, beer, or marijuana – and coke, if I ever knew where to score some.

PETER "HATE" BAGGE:

Tracing paper. I use tracing paper to allow me to rough out my penciled pages over and over again — that way I get all my mistakes out on the tracing paper before the pages get inked on the Bristol Board. Most of the mistakes, anyway.

BRIAN "DEAR JULIA" BIGGS
DAVE "ZEROZERO" COOPER

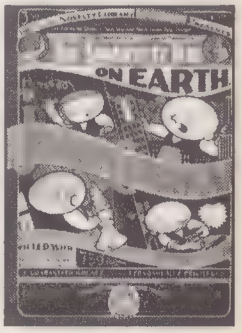
darby: What is your favorite tool?
brian: A 10mm socket wrench from Sears.
Very good. Now what is your favorite tool for art?
B: My trusty Rotring art pen. Or a #67 Gilo pen nib, one or the other.
And that's your favorite nib as well?
DAVE: No, I've never tried it, Brian likes all the hard to find European instruments.
B: Yeah, I'm a snob.
And what is your favorite tool?
D: I can't remember the name of it... Reform? Fountain pens.
Reform, like they were bad?
B: Reform, it's like a religious icon.
D: That's the brand name. Plus Hunt 102 nibs.
And if they disappeared off the face of the Earth would you have a problem doing your art?
D: No, you can draw with just about anything.
Is there one thing that if it wasn't around you'd have a problem doing your art, anything in the world?
D: Nope.
Maybe your hand?
D: Well maybe my hand, my brain, my eyeballs...
B: Sometimes I wonder Dave.

DAVID "SURFIN' STEIN" BOURKE:

darby: What's the most important tool for your art? It can be anything.
A paintbrush.
Is there a special kind, where you'd feel very unfortunate if it were to not exist anymore, without which you might be really upset and might not be able to work well?
OK OK OK, my faith.
Besides that.
What! First I said a paintbrush and that was too literal, and now I say faith and that's too abstract.
OK, be more specific than a paintbrush.
Oh. Well they're all the same, they're all metaphors for each other so it doesn't matter. [Laughs] Is this too deep?
Yeah, that's one level too deep, we can go one level up.
So I need to bring it back?
Bring it back baby, your faith in what?
Everything, humanity.
What is that exactly, that people won't kill you randomly?
Well, just the knowledge that we live in a perfect world gets me through the day.
Who is this guy?

CHRIS "THE ACME NOVELTY LIBRARY" WARE:

My eyes.



interviews by: karen eng, karrin v., eric reynolds, darby, estefany, lorraine

my favorite Tool

HERNANDEZ BROS.

As no comprehensive discussion of "alternative" comics can be had without mention of Los hermanos Hernandez, we threw a few questions at them while they were hiding upstairs during their Art Opening (where original pages from Love and Rockets *were on sale for three-hundred bucks a pop) at Lumpy Gravy on Beverly in Los Angeles.*

Estefany: I'm gonna ask in Spanish, Okay?

Jaime Hernandez: O.K., but we don't speak Spanish.

What?! You're kidding!

Gilbert Hernandez: We'll try it, and see if we understand what you're saying.

¿Qué hubieran pensado si alguien les hubiera dicho, hace mucho, que sus dibujos estarían vendiendo por $300 cada uno?

J: Okay, that one's too long. [Laughter]

If someone had told you a long time ago that your drawings would be selling for three-hundred dollars a piece, what would you have thought?

G: I'd say, "It's about time. It took long enough."

No, a long time ago.

G: Well, we already knew how the workings of the comic book business were, so it wasn't unfathomable to know that you could sell your artwork. A lot of artists did.

J: If I was 20 I'd go, "Yes, one day I hope to achieve that goal." But if I was ten, I'd be going, "What??"

How does it feel to be worshipped by your peers?

G: Worshipped? I wish we were. Well, we have to be humble about this, and lie, [laughs] but it's really nice. We're really fortunate, and thank the good lord. We just work it, and then people tell us what they want to tell us. When they say they like it, we're happy, and when they say they don't, it just doesn't matter.

J: You've got to take them both the same way. If they hate it, you've got to take it, if they like it, you've got to take it.

G: It's a weird thing to answer. I guess the answer is that we don't really entirely believe it, but we're gonna go along with it anyways.

What's your favorite piropo?

G: Piropo?

You know, when you see a fine woman walking down the street, and then you call something to her, and turn around and pretend you didn't say it. Like, "Ay, que curvas, y yo sin frenos." What's your favorite thing to yell at a beautiful woman on the street?

G: Marry me!

You do not, liar! [Laughter] Something like "mamacita".

J: There's one that's just "ayyyy!!"

While making the teeth-sucking noise?

J: Sometimes!

G: "Ayy, mi vida!"

What's your favorite tool?

G: Revenge.

J: My left hand – I won't tell you which hand I draw with.

What physical tool is your favorite?

G: A triple zero finest sable wizard brush. It sounds pretentious, but it's the only thing that I can get real fine lines with. It's about twelve to seventeen bucks, and if it disappeared, I'd just switch to another brand and start over.

J: I use a nib, you know for dipping, ultra fine 22, I don't use a brush. Every once in awhile I can't find it in stores, and I freak out because I've been using them so long that I'm not used to anything else. I found an art store recently that had a bunch of them so I load up on 'em and I'm really happy.

DAME "MEAT CAKE" DARCY:

It's funny, but I think my eraser. I use my eraser up to the point where it's just this tiny little scrap. It was only after I used all of one and didn't have another that I realized how important it is. Without it, I can't draw. The composition of my comics gets adjusted so much that I can't *live* without my eraser. And my dolly pie, Isabel Hope Stanger. She's my 72-year-old inspiration. Just looking into her beautiful eyes gives me all the inspiration I could ever hope for when making my comics.

JOVEN "DIRTY STORIES" KEREKES

My favorite is a 1927 Waterman – they knew how to make 'em then.

RANDY "CHERRY POP TART" VOGEL

My favorite tool is a screwdriver because it goes around and around one way, and then it goes around and around back. Automatic screwdrivers are really fun because you can take the screws out really fast and put 'em right in. And it vibrates – maybe that's why I have so much fun with it.

BOB "MINIMUM WAGE" FINGERMAN

My brain.

SPAIN "NIGHTMARE ALLEY" RODRIGUEZ

I use a rapidiograph most of the time, even though a brush is pretty good.

What about Web stuff?

I've done some color separation using a computer – it's a whole lot faster than what I'm used to.

CAMILLE "LAST GASP" COLORADO

My favorite [Macintosh] tool is the arrow. It's related to the pen – I'm an archer, I like focusing on a bullseye, getting to the point.

WINSTON "BEEN WRONG SO LONG IT LOOKS LIKE RIGHT TO ME" SMITH

A razor blade because I do collage – cut up pieces and reposition them with Uhu glue stick. Rubber cement turns the paper yellow, and Elmer's makes the paper bubble. Every now and then I have to doctor things up with my cartooning expertise.

TRINA "HISTORY OF GIRL COMICS" ROBBINS

I'm not really drawing as much as I'm writing these days. In 1990 when my first book came out, I decided that I was a writer before I was an artist. These days I call myself "writer/illustrator". Other than that I like a #2 seven series Winsor Newton sable. When you get the right one, it's such a sensuous feeling as it flows with Higgins Black Magic over the page.

PAUL "CLOCK" SHARAR:

My teeth [proceeds to show off for the ladies by popping his false front teeth out with his tongue]

darby: [Laughter] That was unexpected! How do you use that for your art?

I grit them.

The bridge is so you don't have to worry about them getting worn down! Besides that, and how come you're missing teeth?

Brushes, Winsor Newton #2.

That's why your teeth are like that?

Yeah, I was chewing on too many Winsor Newton #2s.

drawing of Hernandez Bros. from *Pussey* © Dan Clowes

JIM BLANCHARD

Whenever I get near Seattle, I always end up on Jim B's floor. The awesome inker for* Hate*, he also does his own comic Bad Meat, freelances for numerous publications, and is mostly famous for his signature personality.

Darby: So tell me, who are the best friends of the small artists?
Jim: Well for me, *Hustler* and *Loompanics*.
Explain...
It's a decent gig and I get to draw interesting, crazy stuff, and I get paid well.
What did *Hustler* have you draw?
I'm doing something with Peter Bagge. I actually did an O.J. drawing for them, haha.
And *Loompanics*?
Good old *Lump-anicks*. I did *Vest Busters*. I do all those illegal books. I just did one on how to make your own nerve gas. I didn't use my real name on that one, because I'd probably be a target for assassination or something if I did. The guy who runs the place is real smart, and the reason I get jobs there is because Denny Eichhorn works there, who used to do *Real Stuff*, remember that one? He's really nice about floatin' me the jobs. Other than that I haven't been doing too much besides my *Bad Meat* comic.
Congratulations, finally.
I'd like to do another comic, but boy, the sales are just down the toilet in the comics market right now, it's really fucked. I sold like 6,000 of the first one, and this one sold like 1,300 or something pathetic like that. It's still out, but I don't know if they're going to re-order or anything. It's just really discouraging. I'm hearing the same thing from everybody. A lot of people're threatening to not do comics anymore, like Jim Woodring and Rick Altergot, and people I really respect.
Well you know, you could just take everyone out on the road. You could do the Kill Cartoonsters tour. That would be too disgusting.
Peter did his little Euro-tour, but they didn't fly me over for that. Inkers are just spat upon.
Whatever. So, what's your most valued tool?
Well, at this point I use several brushes on *Hate*, but I could probably narrow it down to a favorite. Favorite would be the Windsor Newton #00 series 7.
How much are those?
They're about twelve bucks. I just got these *Rafaels* that are French and you have to special order them. They're like eighteen bucks. They're bitchin', man. That's how I get my really funky, kind of trademark feathering lines. I get into that groove, and everything's okay. My back doesn't bother me anymore, all of my problems just go away.

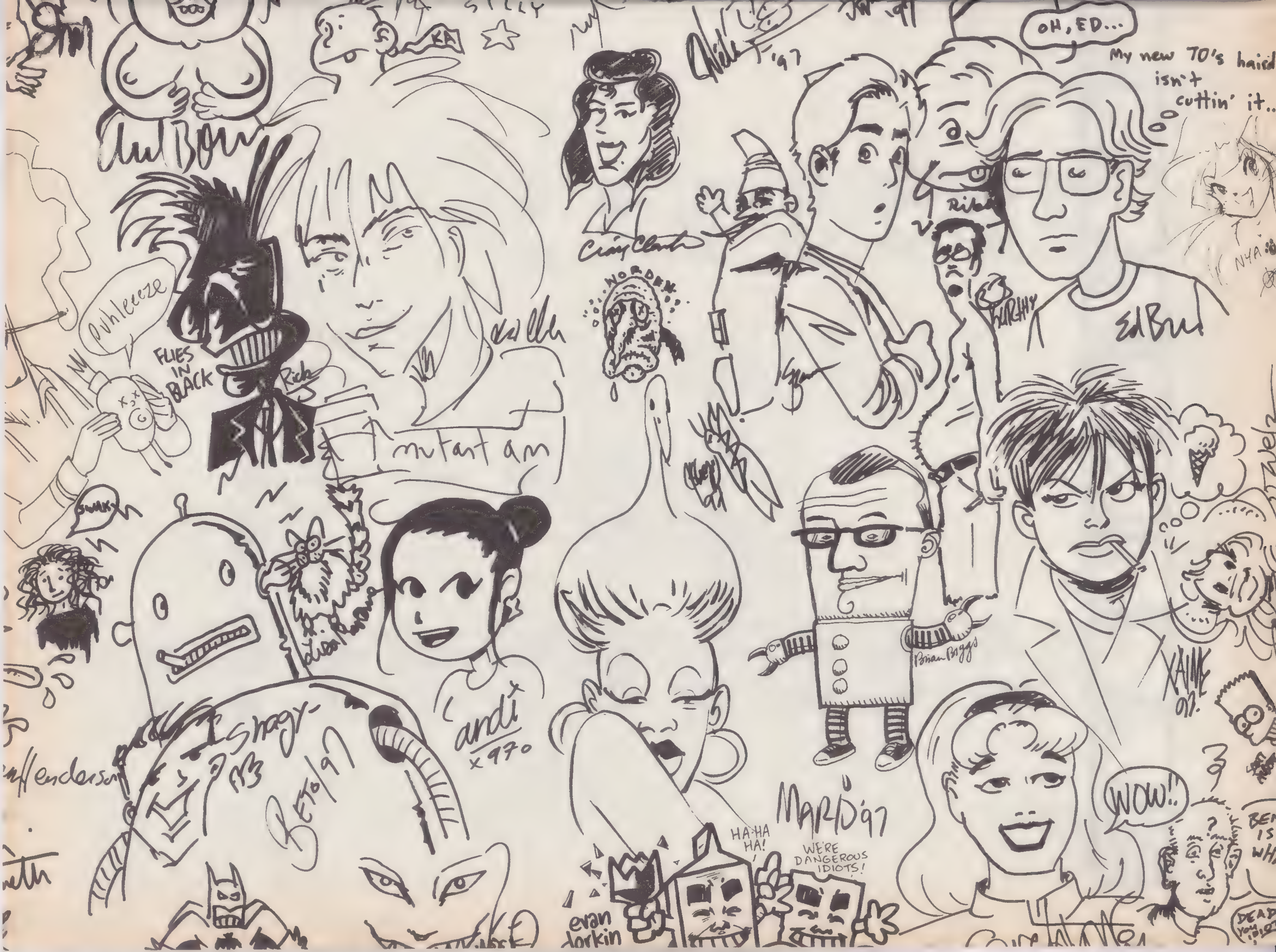
(Note: In an earlier questioning on the topic of most important tool, Jim, after much debate, chose Miller High-Life over the brain.)

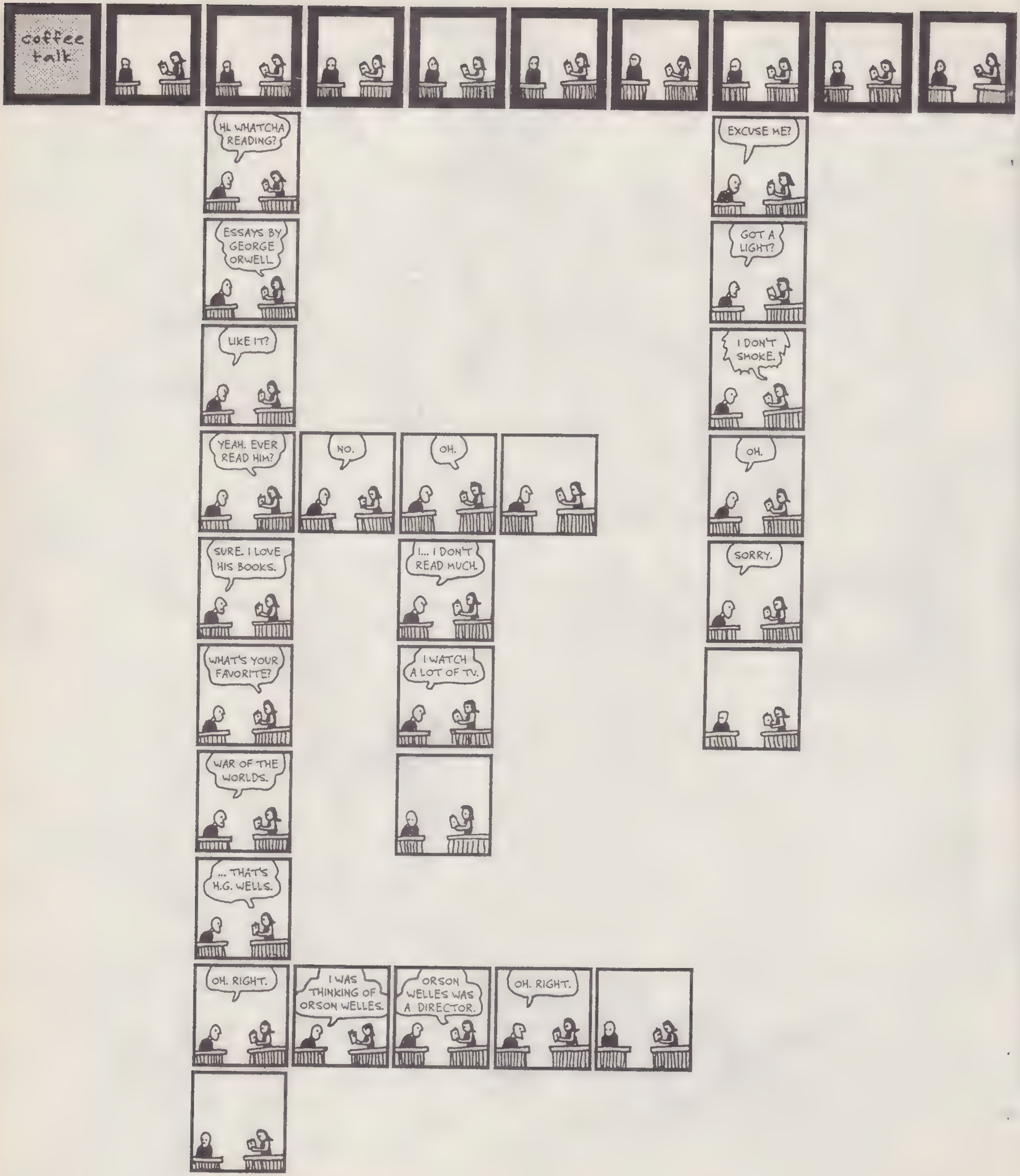
MUSIC FROM THE FILM
TROMEO & JULIET
SUPERNOVA • SUPERCHUNK
NEW DUNCAN IMPERIALS
SUBLIME
UNSANE • MEATMEN
ASS PONYS • BRUJERIA
MOTORHEAD
WESLEY WILLIS FIASCO
BOOTERELLA (W/ JANE JENSEN)
OGLIO RECORDS
Film Available On Home Video
http://www.troma.com/home
TROMA
Available at cool record stores or call 1-800-COOL CDS
http://www.oglio.com

SEX-O-RAMA
Debbie Does Dallas
I Like To Watch
Taboo
Behind the Green Door
Sex World
The Jade Pussycat
The Opening of Misty Beethoven
The Legend of Lady Blue
Eruption
Seka's Fantasies
Amanda By Night
Deep Throat
Music From Classic Adult Movies
OGLIO RECORDS
Available at cool record stores or call 1-800-COOL CDS http://www.oglio.com

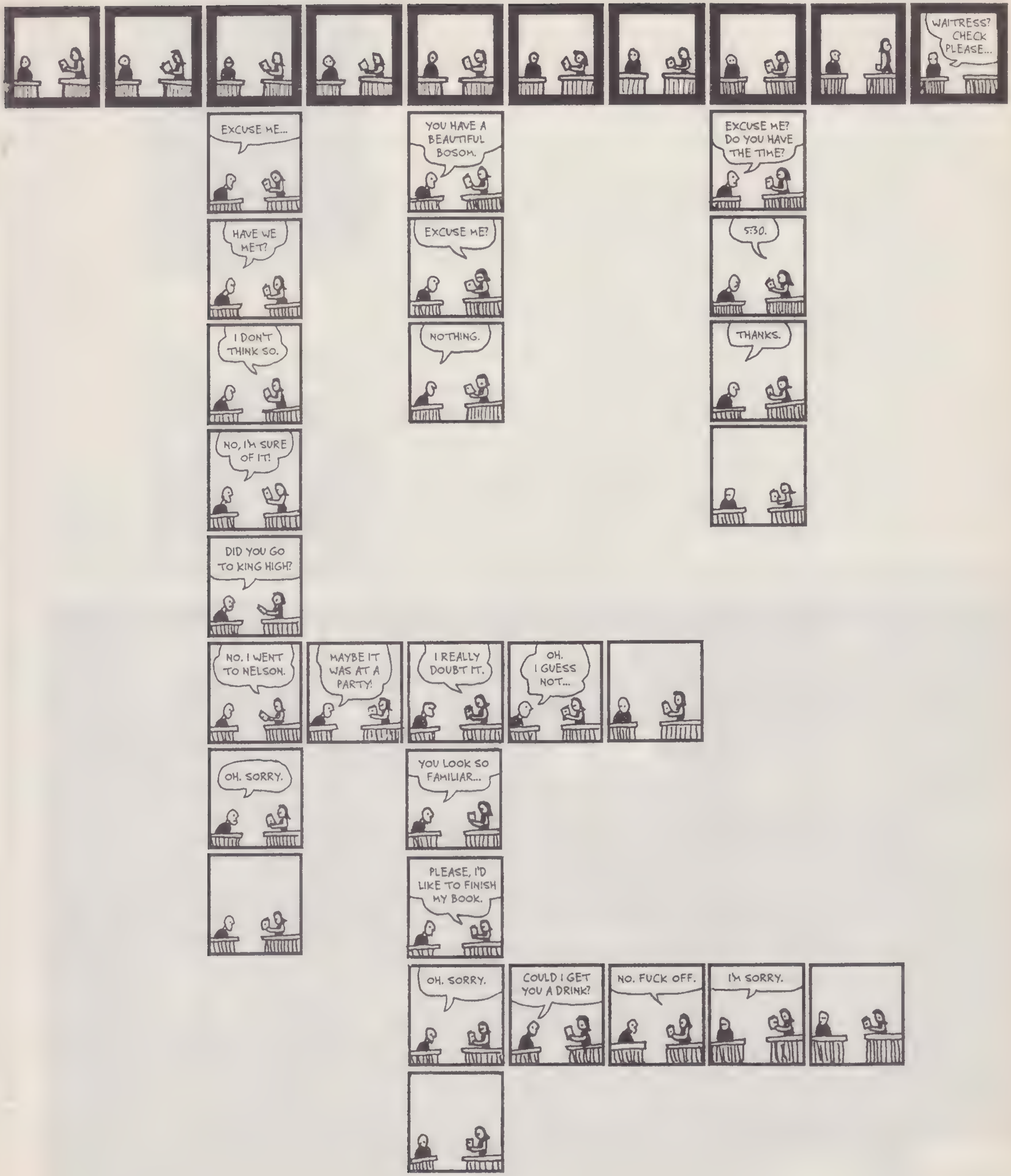
eric reynolds and jim blanchard drawings stolen from *Hate* © Pete Bagge

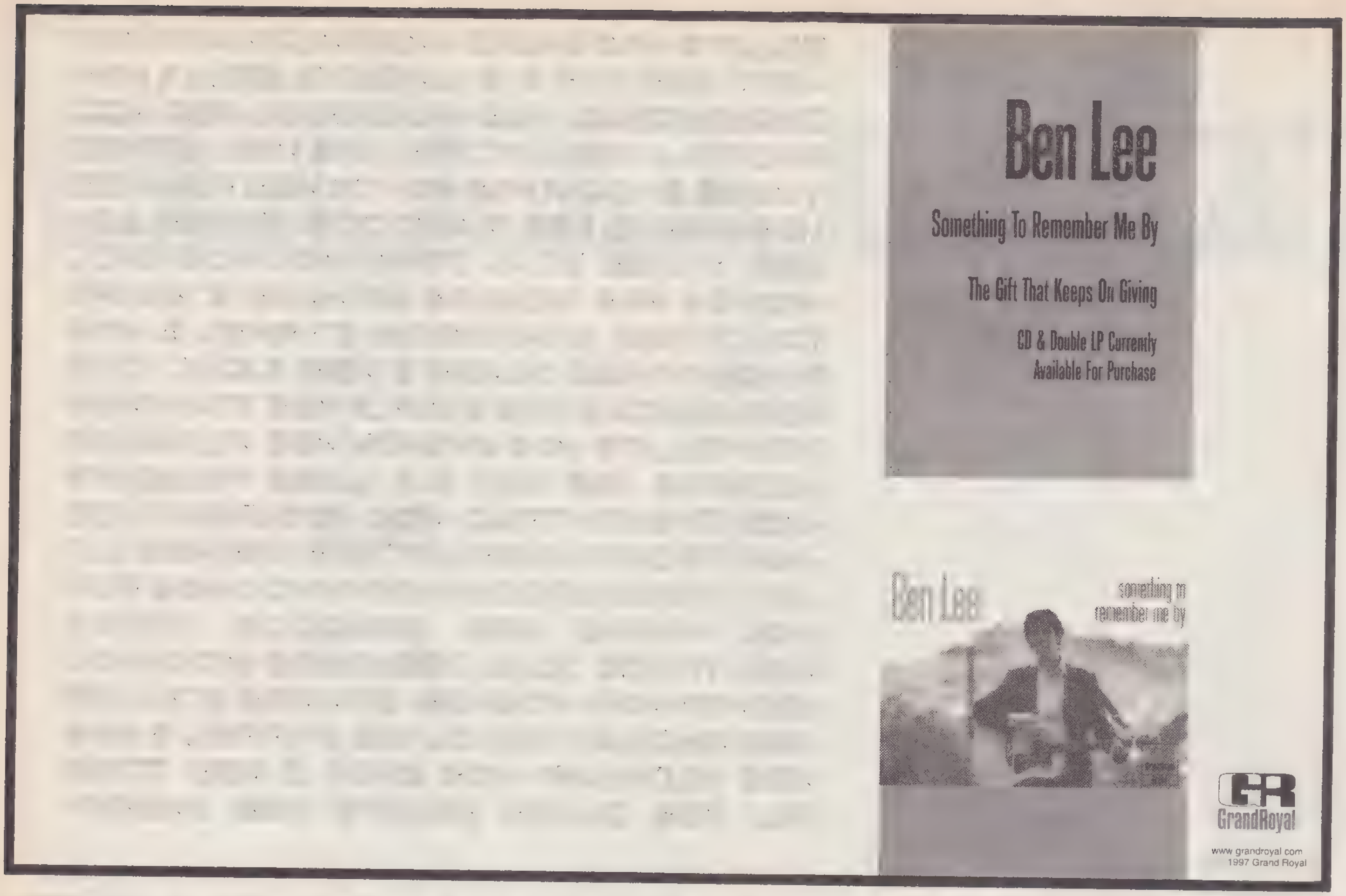
PH
AGUILANA
Jhonan
Fleen9
DB '97
MCENNY
'97
C.A. PHOENIX
Wayne
KINDA TIGHT!
C.S. CHUN
Ayeka
GB 97
Adin Jain


OH, ED...
My new 70's hair isn't cuttin' it...
SILLY
KA
Craig Clark
NORDEN
EdBu
Rick
FLIES IN BLACK
puhleeeze
mutant am
SWAK
Shag
Beto/97
andi x97o
Brian Biggs
XAIME 97
MARK/D'97
WOW!!
HA HA HA!
WE'RE DANGEROUS IDIOTS!
evan dorkin
Henderson


coffee talk
HI. WHATCHA READING?
ESSAYS BY GEORGE ORWELL.
LIKE IT?
YEAH. EVER READ HIM?
NO.
OH.
I... I DON'T READ MUCH.
I WATCH A LOT OF TV.
SURE. I LOVE HIS BOOKS.
WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE?
WAR OF THE WORLDS.
... THAT'S H.G. WELLS.
OH. RIGHT.
I WAS THINKING OF ORSON WELLES.
ORSON WELLES WAS A DIRECTOR.
OH. RIGHT.
EXCUSE ME?
GOT A LIGHT?
I DON'T SMOKE.
OH.
SORRY.

©1997 STYMIE BALDWIN


EXCUSE ME...
HAVE WE MET?
I DON'T THINK SO.
NO, I'M SURE OF IT!
DID YOU GO TO KING HIGH?
NO. I WENT TO NELSON.
MAYBE IT WAS AT A PARTY!
I REALLY DOUBT IT.
OH. I GUESS NOT...
OH. SORRY.
YOU HAVE A BEAUTIFUL BOSOM.
EXCUSE ME?
NOTHING.
YOU LOOK SO FAMILIAR...
PLEASE, I'D LIKE TO FINISH MY BOOK.
OH. SORRY.
COULD I GET YOU A DRINK?
NO. FUCK OFF.
I'M SORRY.
EXCUSE ME? DO YOU HAVE THE TIME?
5:30.
THANKS.
WAITRESS? CHECK PLEASE...



Ben Lee

Something To Remember Me By

The Gift That Keeps On Giving

CD & Double LP Currently
Available For Purchase

GrandRoyal

www.grandroyal.com
1997 Grand Royal

Fat Possum Not the Same Old Blues Crap

R.L.Burnside/Mr. Wizard
"If you like your blues messy and energetic, check out R.L.Burnside's Mr. Wizard. Burnside believes in finding three chords on his distorted guitar and then beating the crap out of them until he feels like doing something else" – Playboy

T-Model Ford/Pee-Wee Get My Gun
"Blues fans who aren't afraid of music with a little dirt still under it's nails should check out T-Model Ford's Pee-Wee Get My Gun." – Cleveland Free Times

20 Miles/20 Miles
"Dirty punk-ass blues ... 20 Miles has coughed up it's first nasty, lo-fi hairball of an album" – Pulse

Junior Kimbrough/All Night Long
"All Night Long" is laced with rocking rhythms and long, trance-inducing electric guitar passages that are like nothing you've ever heard before" ★★★★ Stars – Rolling Stone

R.L.Burnside/Too Bad Jim
"Too Bad Jim" is as raw and deep a dose of blues power as we've heard in many a full moon" – CMJ
★★★1/2 Stars – Rolling Stone

Jelly Roll Kings/Off Yonder Wall
"It's blues, plain and simple honky good time, beer-soaked Mississippi juke joint blues, a thousand miles from Chicago, & still sloppily true to the heart of the music." – Option

The Neckbones/Souls on Fire
"What's not to like about this record– Good kick bucket rock & roll" – Jack Rabid/The Big Takeover

Junior Kimbrough/
Most Things Haven't Worked Out
"Most Things Haven't Worked Out" captures his spare gripping sound... Kimbrough is a master at conveying subtle nuances..." – Request

Fat Possum Records/Epitaph: For a catalog or more information write Fat Possum records, Ltd. PO Box 1923 Oxford, MS 38655-1923
Manufactured and distributed by Epitaph. E-mail: fpossum@watervalley.net

optic nerve

Interview w/ Adrian Tomine

by Karen Eng

I must have picked up my first *Optic Nerve* mini-comic sometime in 1993, when I was living in a tiny country town a hundred miles from Berkeley, and when my life outside of work was so grim I'd taken to balancing my checkbook. It was probably this desperation that propelled me into Comic Relief on University Avenue one day on a visit to Berkeley, 'cause comics and comic book stores had 'til then been foreign to me – they were for teenage boys, like *Die Hard* movies and porn. Anyway, instant overwhelm. The only place I could find my bearings was at the shelves under the back counter, where small, local zines and comics resided in their crudeness – like little bunches of wildflowers in a shop full of exotic blooms. Excited by the idea of self-published comics, I gathered up some of these Xeroxed/stapled/handwritten publications.

Among these, *Optic Nerve* stood out. Not only was it slickly well-designed with a full color cover and high quality paper, but I was struck by its clean lines, careful lettering and its visual balance – especially in contrast to the rest. *Someone publishes this himself?* Impressed, I read it through, and its subtle, intense little stories gave me melancholic pangs. Surprised, I read it again. On the surface, *Optic Nerve* seemed perfectly simple: autobiographical vignettes, somewhat uneventful, linear narrative – snapshots of life. But powerful! It seemed improbable that this sleek, spare, and gracefully made comic could convey such a tense, bleak view of human nature – with undercurrents of wry humor and sweetness. It's probably these contrasts that make *Optic Nerve* so addictive; like haiku, Adrian's stories surprise the reader into experiencing flashes of insight by juxtaposing incongruous elements with incredible precision.

After self-publishing seven issues of mini-comics, Adrian got picked up by Drawn and Quarterly, who has published a number of issues of *Optic Nerve,* a brand new *O.N.* anthology entitled *Sleepwalk*, as well as an anthology of all the minis, *32 Stories*. Since then, he's continued experimenting with narrative and drawing styles, but his comics remain stark and unresolved, framing the desire, and inability, of people to connect.

It is with this embarrassingly worshipful attitude that I went to meet Adrian at a corner café near his apartment, in an area of Berkeley where the hip and financially comfortable converge for coffee. What I expected: a serious, focused, self-contained young man, slightly tense, possibly edgy, possibly enigmatic and reticent. What I found: pretty much that, except for the last bit. The best part about him is his laugh. Oh, and he has really good hair.

Karen: Adrian... Toh-MEE-neh?

Adrian: That's right.

What did you want to do when you grew up?

I pretty much knew what I wanted to do, which was comics, from a really early age. I was talking about doing that before I was even going to school or anything. I have an older brother who would bring them home a lot, so I got really obsessed kind of early. Probably from before I can remember I was doing drawings, trying to copy from comic books and stuff. I guess I thought about other options when I was in high school – when I wasn't sure it was going to be a viable career and I had to be a little more serious – but for the most part it was in the back of my mind all along.

What did he bring home?

My brother? Um, well we were living in a small town in Oregon and there weren't any comic book stores or anything, so it was just stuff you'd pick up in 7-11, just really mainstream, superhero Marvel stuff from the mid to late '70s. Like *Spider-Man.*

You said in your introduction to *32 Stories* that you were doing drawings in ball-point pen in your notebooks, and your brother came home and saw what you were doing, but you weren't doing Marvel kinds of drawings at all.

No – well, *that* little scenario that I described probably took place when I was 14 or 15, so I wasn't really into that stuff anymore. When I was around 11 or 12 I just sort of lost interest. So by that point I was doing something closer to the kind of work I'm doing now.

You were reading other comics by the time you were 14 or 15?

Yeah. I mean, I took a little break. My interest dropped off completely around junior high. I had this weekly ritual of going to the comic book store and picking stuff up, and then I eventually had to realize that I was just wasting money and I wasn't even reading stuff, I was just filing it away in these boxes of every issue I had since I was four years old. So it was a habit more than anything I really enjoyed, and I just gave up on them for awhile. Then just before starting high school I picked up a copy of *Love & Rockets*, and that was kind of a turning point. There was an issue – I'm not even sure which one, but I'm glad they did it – they actually had a little thing on the inside cover where they recommended, like, six of their favorite comics. And it was all stuff that I hadn't actually heard of, so just by getting into *Love & Rockets* I was instantly turned on to like, um, I think *Weirdo* was one of them, and *Neat Stuff*, and *Lloyd Llewellyn*, Lynda Barry, I can't remember what else. But I just kinda went out and sought those things out purely on the Hernandez Brothers' recommendation, and then I just started discovering all kinds of stuff. My interest in comics was really rejuvenated.

And that's when you started doing your journal stuff.

Yeah, exactly. Mainly because of *Love & Rockets*.

So what was life like growing up? Parents? Siblings? You have a sister?

I have a step-sister and a step-brother, but my only real sibling is a brother. I kind of kept to myself a lot; my brother's so much older than me that he moved out of the house when I was still fairly young, so I kinda ended up becoming like an only child at a certain point. And my parents were already split up, so I was just living with my mom. She worked full time, so I had a lot of time by myself. I think that was where everything kind of started, where I got more serious about reading and writing comics, drawing comics and things like that.

How did you wind up coming to Berkeley and what did you major in at Cal?

I moved to Berkeley from Sacramento just for the purpose of going to college. And getting out of Sacramento. [Laughs] But um, I actually wanted to go to art school when I was in high school. But I kind of explored that and talked to some people, and the more I heard about it I just didn't think it was going to be a very good option. My parents said I could do

current day photos by karen eng.

it if I wanted, but they didn't think it was a great idea.

Typical.

Yeah. I'm glad, actually, 'cause then I went to Berkeley, and took some art classes, and I didn't even like the art classes there. I couldn't *stand* them actually: those were the classes I hated the most at Berkeley.

How come?

Oh, it just wasn't stuff I was interested in. I'm sure there are art classes that, if I looked into finding the right ones, could be really beneficial to me, 'cause I don't have any real formal training. So there is some stuff I feel like I've missed out on. But the classes I took, I couldn't stand the people in them, I couldn't stand the teachers, and I couldn't stand the kinds of projects we were doing. I didn't like the whole structure of peer criticism where everybody puts up their own artwork on the wall and everybody has to critique other people's work. I just didn't like it at all.

Is it a style thing too?

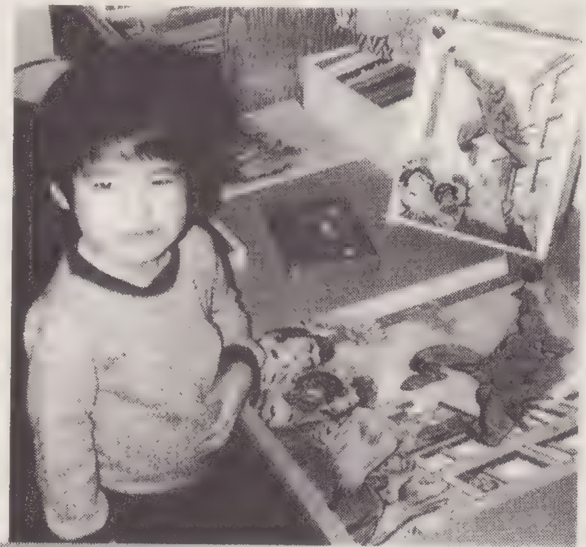
Yeah, I mean the whole atmosphere was geared toward things I didn't really like. The teachers and the other students didn't have much praise to say about my stuff, but there was a guy who would bring in paper towels that he'd stomped his footprint on and put coat hangers through, and everybody would go crazy for it. There's a story in *Eightball*, that Dan Clowes did, called "Art School Confidential" – he kinda skewers the whole scam about art school and really articulates all the problems I had with just these one or two classes. Most people are gearing up towards a fine arts kind of world so they're doing this more bullshit kinda stuff. I mean I'm sure if I went to a big art school there'd be more illustration-type students who are more interested in, you know, figurative drawing and technique. But I just didn't enjoy it, so within my first semester I decided to be an English major, and I stuck with that for the next four years. And that was easy. It *really* was easy... [laughs]

It's clear from your work over the years that you've experimented with a variety of materials. Can you talk about that progression and how you came to what you use now?

OK, well I started out just using ball-point pens because I didn't know any better. When I put out the first mini-comic I was so dissatisfied with how it looked, I started to investigate more. Some trial and error; I went to art stores and started picking out stuff at random. Reading books. I mean it's funny, 'cause as much as I hate Marvel Comics, there's a book on *How to Draw Comics the Marvel Way* that I got when I was a real little kid, and I still have it on my shelf to this day. It really is actually kind of useful. For someone who has no idea about what to use, you can look and it actually says, "Go buy a number two brush," and, "This is the kind of paper to use." So I think that was my first source for what to get at the art store.

Did they tell you to start drawing on a bigger scale?

Yeah, yeah. Just stuff that is just common sense. But... it's not really common sense, you have to learn it somewhere, especially if you don't have any contact with any other comic artists. In Sacramento I never met any other cartoonists, but I think the main thing was getting to where I *was* meeting other cartoonists, and fostering friendships to the point where I could ask them – or go over to their studio and look through their art supplies going, "Oh, OK now is this the good brush to use?" Or going to the art store with another cartoonist and saying, "Can you help me figure out what's a good brush to buy?" So now I've moved to what I'm using now, almost all brush. I mean, even the thin lines I use a brush mainly. Expensive brushes that cost like thirty bucks.



Special inks?

Um, it's gotta be India ink, but through trial and error I've found certain brands are awful and some are really good. I draw really big on big paper; I use a few pen points, but mostly it's brush.

Your lines have gotten progressively cleaner since your early work; you also said in the intro that you became obsessed with drawing straight lines – what possessed you to do that? I mean, are you *normally* a perfectionist?

Yeah, kind of. I guess the period I'm talking about there I was most heavily influenced by Dan Clowes. I was really just obsessed by the preciseness of his art style and I remember being blown away, asking him about his technique, and he explained to me how he does everything with a ruler – draws all the background lines, even the tiniest little crosshatching he uses a ruler. And so I thought, OK, that's the way to get great art! This little tool will solve everything! And then I started doing it and everything just looked really dead. I didn't have his flair to make it look organic. I mean he manages to make it look precise but somehow alive, and when I did, it became stilted and kind of sterile.

So you became friends with him.

Yeah. Actually, that was a real big turning point for me. We both moved to Berkeley at around the same time, and we'd sorta corresponded by mail, but it was actually through a weird turn of events. The woman who is now his wife was actually in a class with me at Berkeley, and I sent a comic to Dan that had my photo in it, and she said, "I think that guy's in one of my classes." So I kind of became friends with her, and then met up with him. He's probably one of my best friends here in town. I think a lot of people who look at my stuff who don't know, they might think I'm swiping him on a superficial level.

Actually that never occurred to me, but Darby mentioned she wanted me to ask you what his influence was...

It's huge, it's huge. I mean, I was a big fan of his originally, but now I can't help but try and pick up tips from him and incorporate them into my own stuff.

Is he a lot older?

He's, uh... 35, or something like that.

After your phase of drawing super-clean graphics, you seemed to go back to adding some of the realistic details and flaws back in, so it doesn't look as '50s, '60s. Seems like you've found your style – do you think you've finally struck a balance?

I'm trying. Not yet. I think everything I look at tends to be a little too much on the rough side or too slick. But yeah, that is what I'm working toward... that balance.

Number 7, for example, is distinctly Lichtenstein-y to me. Which creates an atmosphere suggesting the past – but the scenes and people are distinctly Berkeley. It has that gloomy feeling you get here some days. Is that the kind of thing you're striking for?

People have said that to me, but that's not a conscious choice, the kind of retro aesthetic that shows up. Like I collect old magazines from the '50s and '60s, and I like a lot of advertising art from even the '30s, and it's just design stuff I can appreciate from older times I probably swipe from. But then at the same time I'm 22 and I live in the middle of Berkeley, so I can't help but let the environment seep in.

In "This Is A True Story" you state to your characters that you hold yourself to events that actually happened.

That was a phase, I'm definitely over it. Yeah, during the time I did that story was one of the things I was trying to deal with, mainly because I was really enjoying real true-to-life comics, people like Harvey Pekar and Robert Crumb. They could be non-stories, real events: you could tell that they'd transcribed it from real experience. There's this recognition of reality that came through and I was impressed by that. I thought the only way to get that kind of realism was to quote verbatim from life. I've moved away from that.

You seem to have an amazing balance between being an artist and a writer. [He laughs] I enjoy looking at your stuff as much as I enjoy reading it, where with a lot of other comics I usually focus on one and skim over the other. Do you think of yourself as primarily one or the other? Is either more of a struggle for you?

Both of them are a total struggle for me, though I feel like the writing is the harder part. There's very few times I feel like I get to a total dead end with my artwork like I just can't draw what I want to draw. There are times where it's really difficult, but if I just spend enough hours at it I'll eventually get it. With visual stuff it's kind of a trial and error. You try something and if it doesn't look right you erase it and do it again. But as far as coming up with ideas and being able to write realistically and originally, that's kind of out of my control to a degree. I could be aware of clichés and stereotypes and try to avoid them, but sometimes I just think that the great ideas don't come very easily.

But you can erase a sentence – still scrap it and start again.

Yeah, it's true, but it's not as easy. I mean, when I look at a drawing, when I see a face, I know right away if I didn't draw it right. If the eyes are uneven, something like that, I can instantly see it. But a story – it's hard to just read a whole story in handwritten form and just try and decide if it's going to work as a comic.

See it's exactly the opposite with me. As soon as I start drawing anything, I always feel like if I put down a brushstroke or anything, that's it, it's carved in stone.

Yeah, that's why I pencil excessively. Every line is on there in pencil before I do anything.

Do you plan to focus the comic in one direction now with Drawn and Quarterly, or do they have any input about what they want you to do?

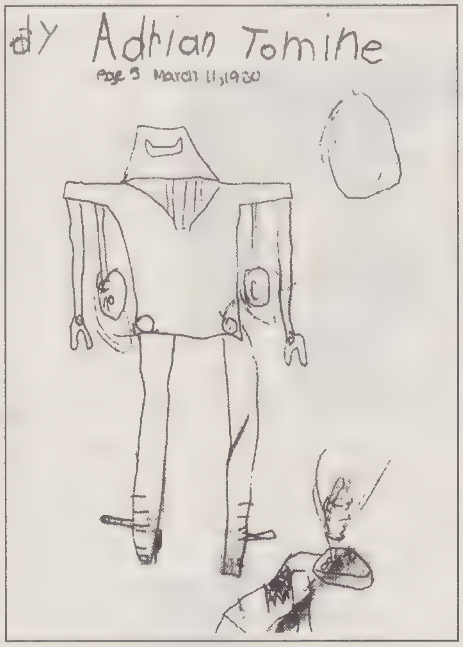
No, they don't have *any* input actually. I just turned in this most recent issue, and I always ask my publisher to call me when it arrives so that I know it arrives safely. And he said, "Yeah, we got it," and I said, "Well, did you read it?" He said, "Yeah, I did." I said, "OK, OK." I didn't want to fish too much for feedback, but he said, "Yeah, it was really good, so we'll send it to the printer," and I said, "OK, bye." So yeah, they're really hands off.

Their job must be easy.

Well, 'cept they've gotta bear the brunt of the financial side, which is the worst part of it. He's not so much an editor as he is a publisher… Believe me, I'd much rather have my job than his.

Writing about women seems to come completely naturally to you, and your letters from women readers seem to reflect that. So… how do you manage that? Especially since you don't have any sisters.

Yeah, that's a good question. Every interview I've read with the Hernandez brothers, they're posed with the same question, "How do you write your women characters so realistically?" And they don't really have a good response either – they always say that they're really observant. Maybe that's what it is… I mean believe me, I've spent plenty of time in my life observing women, you know. [Laughs] So, it's sort of having that outsider's perspective, in the way that I write about people from sort of a distanced point of view. This is an endless response to this question, but the reason most people become cartoonists results from being a social outcast. It's a very time-consuming thing: if you're a real popular guy in high school or something, you're not going to be spending hours and hours at home learning how to draw. So coming from that point of view, I think that if I had been involved with more girls or even had more contact with girls when I was growing up, I might be a lesser writer.



Less astute.

Yeah… the studs in my high school were too busy *having* sex with all the girls to be writing about it.

Well, you didn't write so much about the studs at high school as you did about the babes.

Yeah, that's right, that's right. I've never tried to hide my interests. [merriment]

So along the same lines, I don't tend to read stuff that's self-consciously Asian, but I noticed after awhile that you were drawing Asian people and I liked the way you drew them – and that's when it occurred to me that YOU were Asian. it took me a really long time to figure that out…

[Adrian giggles at this.]

Actually I think I asked someone who said they knew you once, I think it was at the Virgin Megastore, and I said, "Is he… is he *Asian*?" And she said, "Yeah, he's Japanese," and I thought, "Oh, of course"… So the question is: does anyone ever comment on your portrayal of Asian people or ask why you don't address the "experience" directly in your work? I've never seen an interview where you've been asked that…

Oh sure. I've ended up getting sucked into these stupid interviews for these Asian-American publications, and they send some interviewer out to me who doesn't know anything about me other than I'm supposedly Japanese or whatever [laughter], and they think that's their angle and they look at the stuff and they go, "Waaait a minute, this isn't about like, being discriminated against or anything like that." They think I'm going to be able to pontificate on these political issues and I don't even know what they're talking about. And they're always disappointed and the interview comes out terrible. Sure, I mean, there are certain people who expect that or want that and they're sort of disappointed I haven't gone in that direction.

Do you consciously avoid it?

No, I don't consciously avoid it, I… I *unconsciously* avoid it. For me to do a story like a political commentary would be a really self-conscious move.

Well, I mean not even unconsciously avoiding it, but I think a lot of people when they write stuff draw on whatever they grew up experiencing.

Yeah – I've had a really suburban, white, middle-class kind of upbringing. So I don't have a lot of experience… That's the thing, if I write a story, no matter what, it has to be personal. But if I wanted to write some story about personal injustice, I couldn't write anything.

You were raised as a White Man!

Yeah! [Laughter]

Are both of your parents Japanese?

Yeah.

Were they supportive of you being an artist?

Yeah, very much so. My dad does a lot of artwork himself, and he's into doing music and… both my parents have pretty steady, straight jobs, but they definitely were always encouraging. And once they saw I was making a living off of it, they were more than encouraging, they were really happy for me.

Do you think in the world of comics it's just easier to avoid those sorts of race expectations, or is it totally irrelevant? *Gender* of artists, for instance, seems to be highly relevant.

No, I think that most comic readers are so apolitical and out of it anyway… I don't think anybody wants to see me do a big tirade about how… I can't even think of an example. Maybe in a way this is economically motivated, but deep down I really do want to have a comic that appeals to everyone. I want to do a comic that isn't going to be alienating in any way. I'm not making *distinctions* about gender, etc., I'm just writing these people, these *characters*, and I have to assign them sexes before I draw them. I'm trying to deal with more of these universal kinds of issues.

One thing I've noticed is that in later *Optic Nerves*, you draw yourself in a more cartoony way than you do your other characters. Seems as though you're making fun of yourself?

Yeah.

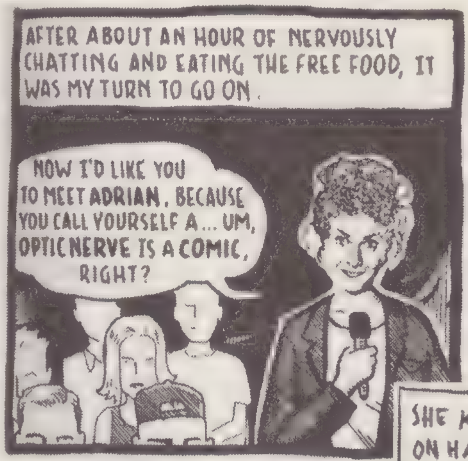
Also, you show up less now in later comics;

are you phasing yourself out as a character?

I'm not ruling it out. I haven't done a story like that in a long time and then in that third issue I did that story about riding on the bus... In a way almost every story I do is autobiographical. Just disguised to different degrees and distorted to different levels. That one story, the reason I did it as a straight-ahead autobio was I feel that as soon as I draw myself as the real character, the people who know that's supposed to be me will take the story on some authority – they'll believe it, they'll believe it really happened.

Even though it might be a stretch?

Yeah, yeah. But if I put it with this icon that's supposed to represent me, I'm hoping people will take it as being true. And also, it has to be unrevealing enough. That's why I abandoned that, because I'm too private of a person to really get in-depth with really serious issues, and have it be starring me and my parents or me and my girlfriend.


AFTER ABOUT AN HOUR OF NERVOUSLY CHATTING AND EATING THE FREE FOOD, IT WAS MY TURN TO GO ON.
NOW I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET ADRIAN, BECAUSE YOU CALL YOURSELF A... UM, OPTIC NERVE IS A COMIC, RIGHT?

BID first met up with Adrian when Darby & him were guests on the Jane Pratt Show. They both felt obligated to document the experience (above).

But the comic *is* very revealing, I think.

Yeah, if you can read between the lines – you can figure out a lot about me by reading these so-called fictional stories.

You *know* you're going to get the question about being depressing, but the stories have been becoming increasingly painful, and I actually think they're getting better and better as they get more painful.

Well, thanks.

I don't know if it's just 'cause I like pain [laughter], but I can empathize with them, even though the earlier stories were, sure, funnier, more entertaining, I would actually rather read the stuff that's coming later.

I kind of hope that my work will have some longevity... there's some humorous stuff that's been done so well that you can go back to it and really enjoy it. Some of Dan's stuff is like that for me, and some of the original run of *MAD*, when it was a comic book in the '50s, is like that. But a lot of stuff, like the kind of stuff I was doing, throwaway stuff, there's an amusement you get from reading it once, then you get to the end, and oh, it's funny, he lost his job, or something like that, but it's not something you'd really wanna go back to. You're not going to have the same level of enjoyment the more you read it. The *most* you'll get is the first time you read it. I'd rather have stories where the *least* you'll get out of it is the first time you read it.

Is that why you don't respond to the letters saying that you're depressing? I mean, you print them; do you take them seriously?

Weeeell, I take every letter I get with a grain of salt. Which means, I don't get too depressed by the really harsh criticisms, and at the same time I feel like sometimes people are being over-zealous, or they're going too far with their praise.

So you don't accept when Japanese girls offer you their underwear?

[Laughs] No... no. I always feel like the people who are writing these letters have a sense of bravery or boldness because of this anonymous form of communication. They're saying stuff they might not really mean, but they're trying to get my attention. And also, about the letters, I should mention that the letters I print in the comic are a small percentage of what I get, and all the other ones are pretty bland. They're not all that interesting; I'm picking the extreme ones, like the really over the top, weird ones. I don't really wanna respond. There's no point, I feel like I set it up now so that there's an ongoing dialogue between other readers where I'm not involved in it. Like I'll print one issue where there's all these people saying, It's too depressing, then I'll get all these letters from people saying, I read those letters and it's not depressing, it's fun!

Is there an *Optic Nerve* e-mail discussion list going on yet?

I don't know. Someone told me someone set up a whole Web-site or something about my comic, and I never heard anything about it.

A shrine. I'll go look for it. [I did look, and while an Alta Vista search turned up a few things about Adrian, there was nothing resembling an *Optic Nerve* shrine that I could find. Not yet.]

Yeah, I don't know anything about that stuff. I don't even have a modem.

Oh I just also wanted to tell you, I like how you draw your hair...

Ha! [Much embarrassment on my part]

...and also how your character will just suddenly – you actually still draw this, where you suddenly lose your temper? and your face will just explode. You don't – do you do that?

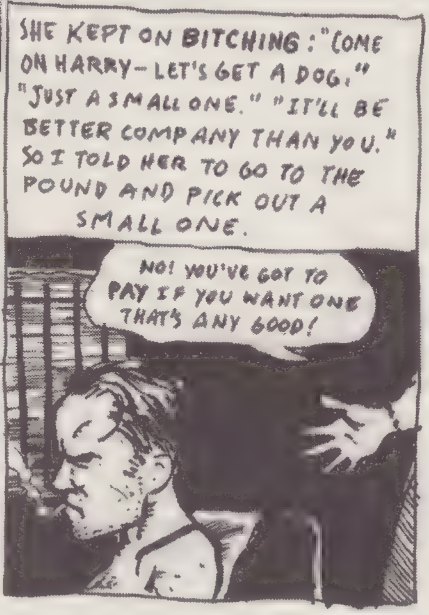
No, I don't really do that.

What would it take for me to push your buttons enough to make your face explode?

Boy... quite a bit actually, I'm a pretty passive person. Maybe if I was behind the wheel of my car and you did something that really annoyed me – I tend to flare up behind the wheel. I don't act on it physically, but I say some pretty horrible things. [Laughter]

Why did you choose Drawn and Quarterly over one of the local publishers, like Last Gasp or Slave Labor?

Well, for one thing, I wasn't really inundated with offers or anything. It wasn't like I had contracts from every publisher lying out in front of me and I just had to choose which one to sign. Drawn and Quarterly was one of the first companies to contact me, and they'd always been my dream company to work for. When I started out doing it, almost all the comics I was buying were published either by Fantagraphics or Drawn and Quarterly. I think the one thing that put Drawn and Quarterly a notch up in my book was that I liked every single thing they published at the time. This was, you know, early-'90s – '91, '92. I just thought, "Wouldn't it be cool to be a part of that?" This kind of small group of really great cartoonists, whereas with Fantagraphics, they have some great ones but they have a ton of shit too. I did get some offers from some smaller companies, but I guess I had enough ego in me to feel I could hold out for better. To sorta think, "Well, if I felt like this was the best I would be able to do, I'm gonna jump on it, I better sign on." But then I thought, "I'm living at home, I'm not paying any bills, I'm just a high school student, I haven't been at it very long. I'm pretty sure that I'll get better, I'm not at this desperation point where I *need* to sign on." That's the thing, I *had* that luxury... I was young enough where I could hold out for the offer I wanted.


SHE KEPT ON BITCHING: "COME ON HARRY– LET'S GET A DOG." "JUST A SMALL ONE." "IT'LL BE BETTER COMPANY THAN YOU." SO I TOLD HER TO GO TO THE POUND AND PICK OUT A SMALL ONE.
NO! YOU'VE GOT TO PAY IF YOU WANT ONE THAT'S ANY GOOD!

At what point did the offer come?

I was a college student. So I was... 19, I guess.

Must've been pretty exciting.

Yeah, it was very exciting. And I remember when I got that call I told all my roommates, and they didn't know what a small-stakes business comics is, so they acted as if I'd won the *Lotto* or something – they were like, "So are you dropping out of school?" I was like "*No way!* Why would I drop out of school?"

Is it easier to produce *ON* now that you're with Drawn and Quarterly?

Yeah it's a lot easier. When I first signed up with them it was this tremendous relief. Dealing with a mini-comic on the business side is pretty easy if you're not dealing with that many, but when I was doing like 6000 copies and dealing with distributors – I mean this is the kind of stuff that I'm sure Darby could understand – the business side is trying, you've gotta be a business person to make it work. And I think she's good at it... but I don't think I had it in me, the know-how or the hustler attitude –

I just wanna draaaw, izzat so wroooong?

Exactly. I didn't wanna promote, anything like that. I hated packing up boxes and lugging them to the post office and stuff. I felt like I was spending equal amounts of time on both things, the business and the creative sides. So when Drawn and Quarterly took over, it was almost like all the stuff I disliked was suddenly taken care of for me and I was free to do all the stuff I did like.

But it takes you just as long to get the comic out, so you're just spending longer on the art?

Yeah… that's the thing. It didn't start coming out any more frequently. Even now that I'm out of school it's not that much faster, because I feel like I'm at such a learning stage I can't just sit down and do it. I can't bat it out like second nature. I really have to sweat over every single line. I am always putting such high standards on myself trying to make it better. It *is* taking me longer.

So the more time you've got, the more you have to diddle with it so it's perfect perfect perfect –

Yeah, there was an interview with Dan Clowes recently where the interviewer was taking him to task about why it takes him so long to put out an issue now. And he said he feels like he has an equation in his mind where the more he learns about writing and art and comics, the more time it takes him to produce it. When he sits down he's drawing on so many sources and so much knowledge it takes him even longer to do it, which I sort of relate to. As for the business aspect, it's a really bad time for anyone in the comics business. Especially the publishers. I would say the majority of cartoonists can't make a living off of it. I'm eternally grateful that I don't have to have a job. Truly in terms of the business, I think it's a dying medium. I think there'll always be people interested in creating the art and reading it, but in terms of the economic side, distributing, producing things on paper that go out to little specialized stores, I think it's not long for this world.

Seems to me like it's getting more and more popular.

Well, you're probably seeing more and more articles about it in mainstream media, newspapers and magazines, etc. But some of the most successful stores around are going bankrupt and shutting down. Comic Relief on Haight Street had to go out of business, the biggest and best store in New York City just declared bankruptcy, distributors are shutting down, publishers are going out of business – it's just terrible. I think in the mid-'80s things were going so well, especially in alternative comics, that people couldn't believe how good they were getting. And unfortunately, it peaked. It's been downhill since then. I'm always grateful I can make a living off this, but it kills me to think what my life would have been like if I'd been doing this stuff in 1986. I'd be selling ten times as many copies and making that much more money.

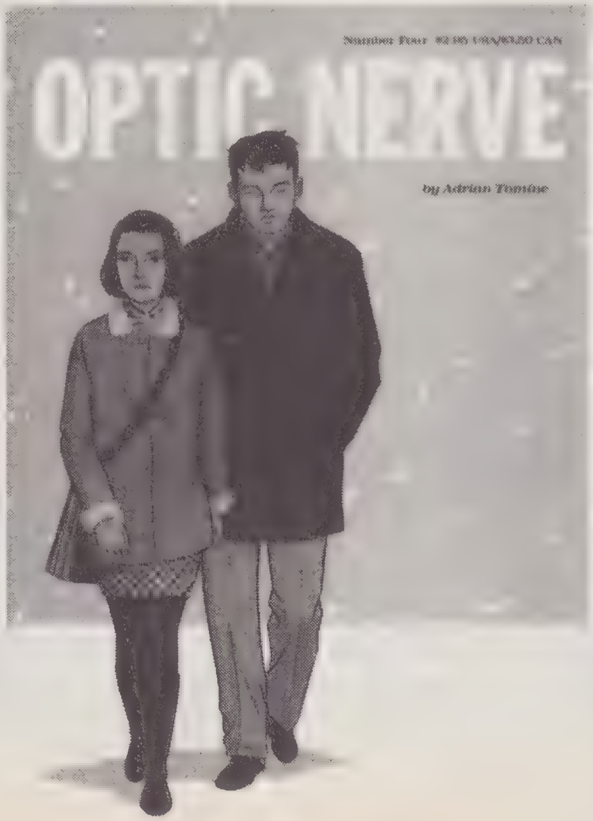
SO I TELL GREGG, OKAY, I'VE GIVEN IT SOME THOUGHT. I KNOW HE'S NOT GOING TO STOP ASKING. IT'S ONLY WORDS, I TELL MYSELF, AND IN AUGUST HE'LL BE BACK AND NONE OF IT WILL MATTER ANYWAY. I PULL THE PAGES FROM THE ENVELOPE AND BEGIN READING HIS SCRIPT VERBATIM.
I'M LYING ON THE BED, WEARING NOTHING BUT BLACK STOCKINGS AND A LACE GARTER BELT...

Well, maybe there will be a resurgence.

I'd like to see it.

Maybe it'll go on-line!

Well, to me that's the death of it. That's the problem. Less and less people are interested in this medium. Alternative comics have always had a minority audience in terms of who buys comics, but we've sort of needed – as much as we make fun of the fat boys and geek kids – we really need those people to pump the big bucks into comics like *X-Men* and *Spider-Man* to keep these retailers in business so that we have an outlet for our stuff. I think if there's a whole new generation of kids who, when they get their allowance, they'd rather go buy some new CD-ROM or something rather than buy a comic – I mean comics are really expensive for the finite entertainment you get out of them. Technological things are getting cheaper and cheaper. Movies on video tape are nineteen dollars…



Comics are still only three bucks.

Yeah. But it's not the same idea where a kid can spend his change at the convenience store, 25¢. It's getting more *elitist*, which is the last thing we need.

Yeah, I know what you mean. People who're gonna spend money on comics, if they don't *really* like the art, are just not gonna buy it…

Yeah, you're real discriminating. It's true. It'll be interesting to see where we are five years from now. Everybody's trying to scramble to get new means of distribution, everyone wants to get into the mainstream book market, everyone wants to get books into bookstores – the comics market as we know it is on its way out. Something will come up to replace it, but I don't know what.

Do you find that your friends are wary of you, that you might tell on them in your work?

Tell on them? You mean expose them?

Yeah, or on the other hand, are they anxious to get into your stories?

[Chortles] It's probably a little of both, but it's really hard to read people about that. I mean, there's been times when I've done stuff which I thought was *so* obviously based on a real person. And I've felt like, "Oh god, I can't bear to face them now that I've published this." I'm just, I'm so – so TENSE I should have disguised it better, oh my god. And then I see them and they don't even say anything about it. Or then there's the opposite extreme where people say like, "Yeah, that one character, *that* sure was an interesting character; hmm, I wonder where you got *that* idea?" And I'm like, "I SWEAR!! I made that up!" And they'd be like, "Well that happened," and I say, "Yeah, well that happens to *everybody*." But they're not really mad at me, they're acting like they're mad, but they're sort of flattered. I don't really know. I think the main people that have to worry are the girls that are crazy enough to go out with me, 'cause they're the… the…

Obvious victims.

Yeah, they're the targets most likely to be… not that I *attack* them, but they're grist for the mill. You know. I write about relationships and stuff, so of course there's going to be some spillover between my real life and what I write about, it's inevitable.

But I bet it can be awkward sometimes.

Oh yeah. There's all kinds of crazy things, like, I did a lot of comics earlier based on my first real relationship that I had – that was the inspiration for a lot of material, some real directly, some obliquely. And it's been weird

SIGH!
CREEP!
END

because I'm still in touch with her, I'm still friends with her. And she *never* talks about that stuff. There's stuff that's been printed in my comics, there's a play that took place that was based on lot of that material...

You wrote a play?

I didn't write it, someone adapted stuff from my comics.

Oh I see.

And I don't know how aware she is about the relationship between the comic and real life.

Do you think she reads it?

Sure, yeah. <pauses> I don't know.

You're not gonna come right out and ask her then?

No, I don't wanna… I'm glad she doesn't put me on the spot, I'm *glad* we don't talk about it. So she might just be courteous and knows I don't want to discuss it… or maybe she's unaware of it

So to what degree do you desire fame and recognition for your work?

Fame and recognition? <pauses> Well, since we're sitting here in public and you're asking me I'll say, *"Oh, it's not much, you know."* But if you can tap into my brain tonight at 3 a.m. when I'm sitting over the drawing board sweating and breaking pencils and shouting and everything like that, you'd hear me mumbling something like, *"Oh god, I hope this makes me all this money and I hope people love this and I want everybody to think I'm great."* So.

'K, if there's *one* thing you could change, what would you change?

In terms of personality traits and stuff? <long pause> See, I can think of plenty of negative things, but don't know if it's something that I would want to change. I could say I wish I was better at talking to girls, but maybe that would have a negative effect on my comic, or... I also feel like I'm too critical of everything, of people, of things that I see. But then at the same time I think, as critical as I am of other people and other things, I'm just as critical of myself and my own work. I think that's what propels me to keep trying harder and trying to improve.

What's the thing you most want people to know about you but it just never comes up?

Jeezus. I guess people who only know me through the comic might have sort of a skewed perception of my personality. They expect me to be someone who's really down, and really depressed and lonely and sad. But I have a sense of humor, and I hang out with people. I guess that I'm hopefully a slightly more well-rounded person than my comic would lead people to believe. [Laughs]

You're really not suicidal.

No way. Never. *Truly* depressed people wouldn't have the energy to work for six months on a comic book.

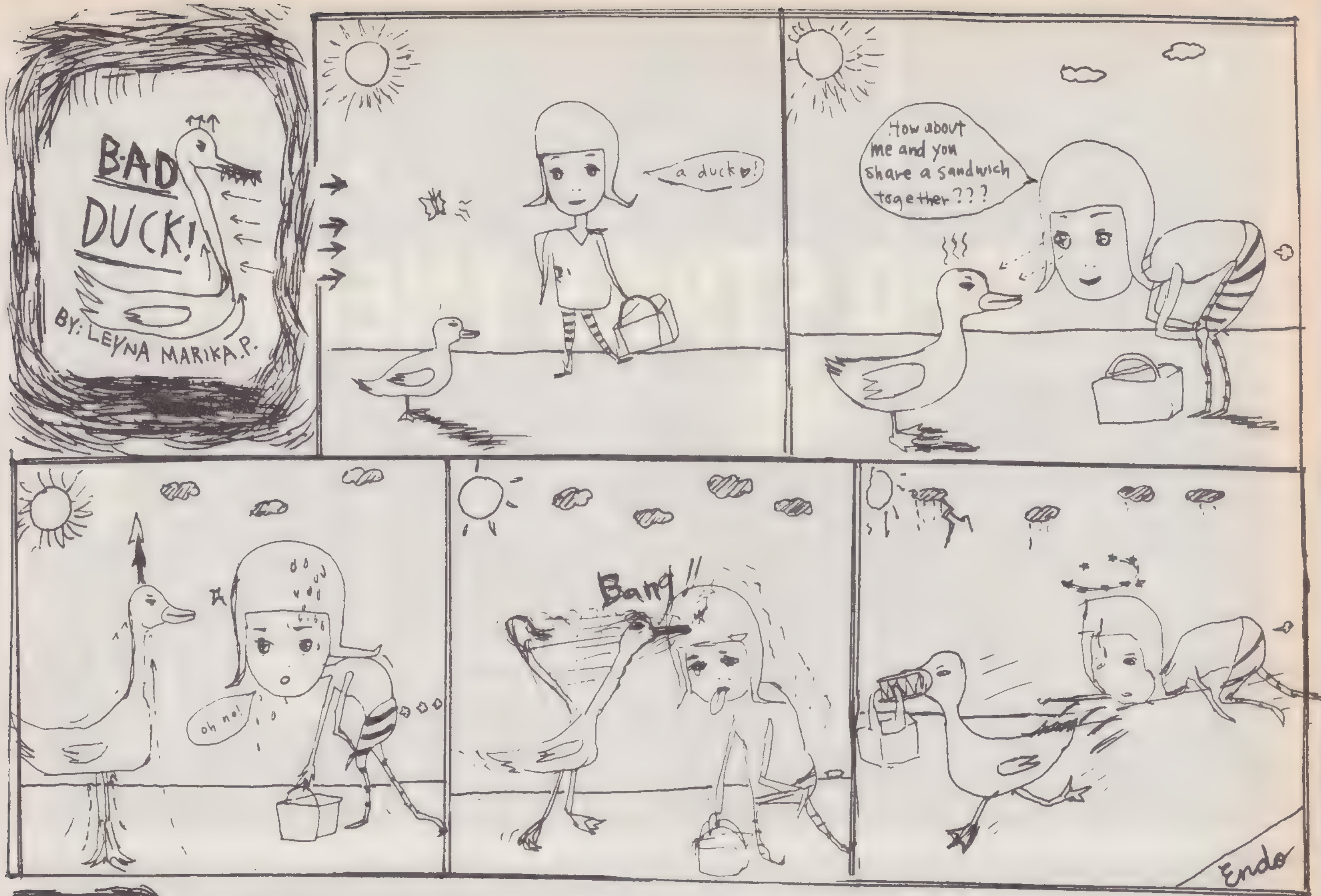
Good point. …Any last words? You can go ahead and rant if you want to…

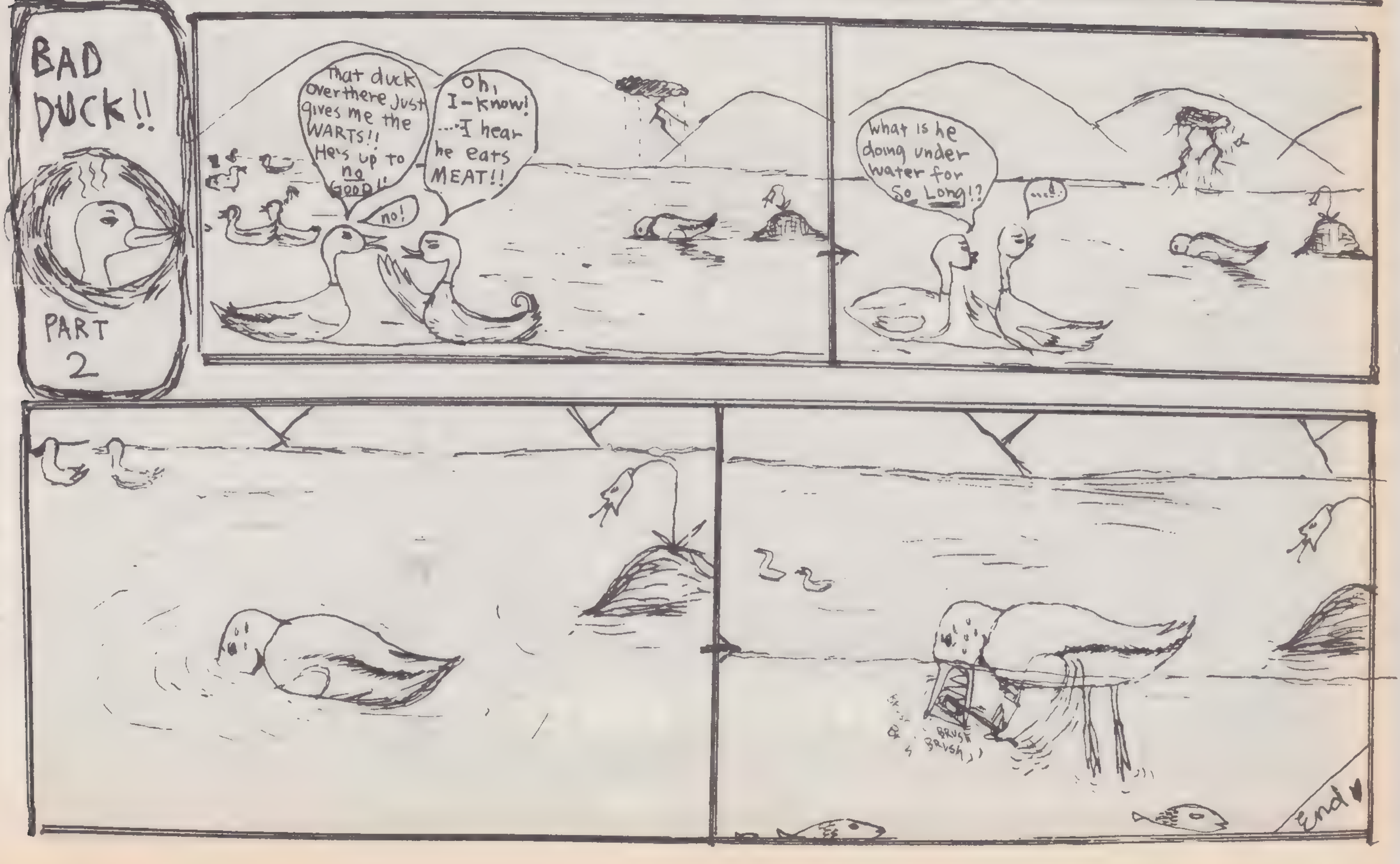
[Carly Simon's "It's Too Late" starts playing in the background]

No, I don't think so. I can't think of anything. When I do an interview with *Ben is Dead* I feel like I'm sort of preaching to the converted in a way. This sort of relates to my fear of the industry dying and everything, but I would encourage people to continue buying so-called alternative reading matter whether it's self-published magazines like *Ben is Dead* or alternative comics. Some people might balk at the price or the hassle that it involves to go to these specialized stores, or it's too irritating to have to wait six months between issues. But I *hope* enough people will feel like it's worth it and continue to support those kind of things.

Drawn & Quarterly: www.eggcite.com/quarterly

songs
for
the
jet
set
JETSET
jetset records 740 broadway new york ny 10003


BAD DUCK!
BY: LEYNA MARIKA P.
a duck♥!
How about me and you share a sandwich together???
oh no!
Bang!!
Endo


BAD DUCK!!
PART 2
That duck over there just gives me the WARTS!! He's up to no GOOD!!
no!
Oh, I-know! ...I hear he eats MEAT!!
What is he doing under water for So Long!?
...!
BRUSH BRUSH
End♥

r.
BUT SLEEP CAME SLOWLY
RED STARS THEORY
Mars Accelerator
Bare Minimum
The West Section Line
CD $10 - LP $8 - CDEP $6
Rx Remedy: Box 12339 Seattle, WA 98111
RX
x.

two musical adventurers riding the crest of discovery.
pulsars
ALMO
featuring "tunnel song" out now

Christine Shields and the Blue Hole She Lives In

BY NOËL TOLENTINO

Over the past some oddball years, Christine Shields has been quietly perfecting her convoluted craft, spinning fantastic tales of ghoulish gloom and whirlwind whimsy with only the finest of yarns. Surreal midnight oil obsessions spill over into cross-hatched hatchet-ax humor and blaze with a fiery five-alarm morning glory of dizzying disdain and delinquent discovery. It's there, hidden in the dark circles that surround her ice-blue stare. There, in the smudged red lipstick and the pearl-drop dew of her uneven smile. Twenty-seven years out of the womb and a longtime native of Northern California, she has become somewhat of a resident artist, her dazzlingly daring endeavors gracing the covers of *Flatter!* and *Bananafish* zines, or as the colorful cherry-on-top of the now defunct Snapperticker store. On occasion, her work has even managed to weave its way through the pages of *Hustler* and *Screw*. But pandering to pornography is not a preferential parlor trick in her magic book, you silly preverts. The real skinny is her comic book, *Blue Hole*, which displays her flowing tumultuous talents for all the world to gawk at. Though she's not predisposed to the autobiographical approach that many of her contemporaries have embraced, her work nonetheless resonates with a knowing hum that only a life tinted by livid experiences and excursions could paint. If you asked me, I'd say that Christine Shields is good people.

Noël: Why do you have a toothache?

Christine: I have a tootache because I have a filling that my dentist didn't drill down enough so now my tooth is bigger than it used to be.

Your tooth is bigger?

Yeah, slightly bigger but enough to change my whole bite. So I had to get it sanded today.

Where did you go to school?

At the San Francisco Art Institute. I was a painting major because I was a young teenage girl and I thought I had to go to college. I didn't want to go to a regular college so I went to art school and, since I didn't know any better, I just stayed there. It wasn't the greatest, and was even disappointing in a number of ways. I would have liked to take a more traditional education with courses in anatomy and things like that. The painting department at the Institute came out of the Abstract Expressionist school of thought which basically meant that teachers could say, "All right! Cooool. Just keep on painting. Right on!"

"I like it!"

[Laughs] They never taught me any valuable skills. However, I did have some good film teachers like Larry Jordan, the animation teacher, and George Kuchar. He's the greatest and his class is really fun. I actually ended up liking the film department more even though it wasn't my major.

Would you say that your primary source of inspiration to be an artist was from cartoons and comics?

No, it wasn't. Here's the way it goes: I've always wanted to be an artist and I always really liked stories and I read a lot when I was a kid. I never read comic books back then because most of the comic books available to me were superhero comic books and I just wasn't interested in that stuff. Books like *The Wizard of Oz* and *Alice In Wonderland* were more influential. Then when I was a teenager, somebody gave me a copy of *Love & Rockets* and I just fell in love with it; that's when I first realized comics could be something else.

Who has served as inspiration in the narrative structure you employ in *Blue Hole*?

Hmmm. That's a difficult question since I'm influenced by so many different things. There is a certain type of literature that I like, what some people call "magical realism" – it's sort of a corny name – like Marquez, Italo Calvino and Robertson Davies. Those people are such amazing writers though, whereas my stuff just sort of goes wherever it goes. Whatever structure I end up having is just luck. [Laughing]

After having gone to the Art Institute, do you believe that all artists are a little cuckoo in the clock?

The myriad of creatures came to be and were cast into the world.

[Laughing] Um…

Do you think it's essential?

Not really, though it is common. There were a lot of freaks at the Art Institute which is not to say that they were necessarily good artists. The school did seem to attract outcasts and it was sort of torturous being there. There were all the people with these bruises or didn't get enough attention when they were little, all trying to be really dramatic and trying to work out their crazy problems. As far as artists go in general, I've met so many types, some of them are drama queens and it's part of their personality that either they *are* crazy or want everyone to think they are. On the other side of the spectrum, I've met people who are completely down-to-earth and rational to a certain degree, but not boring by any means. They're still eccentric in their ways, but they're not cuckoo. [Laughs]

Are there any visual perspectives that you avoid drawing?

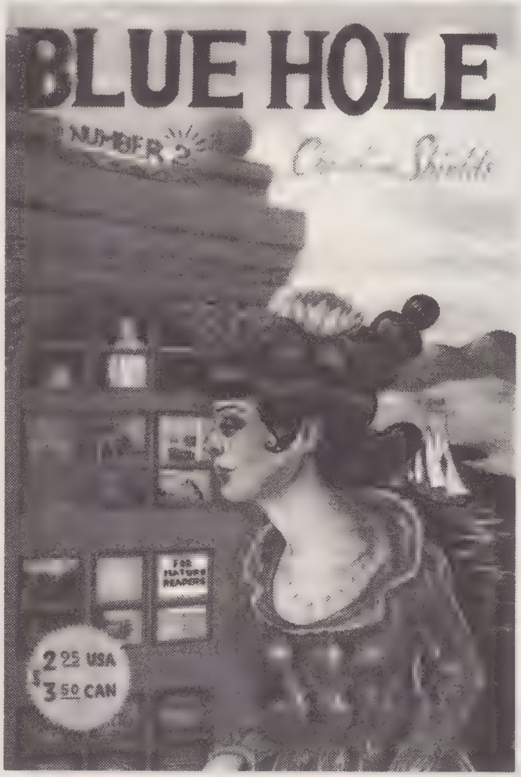
Well let me see… it seems like *you've* noticed something that I haven't. Now I'm paranoid.

"I don't like to draw the anus as much as I used to."

[Laughs] I really try not to draw butt hairs 'cuz they're really not attractive. [Laughing] I think it takes away from the realism of my work.

Hey, butt hair is as real and gritty as you can get!

I'm not very gritty. I really don't like to draw ugly things. I like morbid things, but I don't like them to be ugly. But that's not what you're asking about. One thing that I don't like to draw is the kind of foreshortening where someone is lying on a bed and you are looking at them from their feet. Sometimes I had to do that in drawing class and even if I did it perfectly, it still looked completely awkward and unreal.



I like things that are strange sizes, big or small. Like small elephants or big shoes.

There's definitely an artful deception of what you choose to draw, too.

Is there any particular scene which, as you placed pen to paper, disturbed you as it evolved?

I don't write autobiographically in a strict sense, but there are elements of my work that subconsciously relate to my life somehow. Once in awhile I find myself doing a story which is like pulling teeth for me, like something that I just have to get out. I might not enjoy it very much, but I feel better when it's over. The Kerosene Boy, for example, has caused me grief 'cause he's related to certain incidents in my life, so eventually I had to kill him.

I definitely felt Kerosene Boy was a result of actual rough 'n' tumble relationships you might of had, the kind of person that simultaneously repels and attracts you.

Yeah, there's definitely people that helped make up the character of the Kerosene Boy. I used to get myself into these really strange relationships so there's some truth to those stories in a way. [Laughs] I hope I don't have anymore experiences like that. I dunno, you change, you like different kinds of people in your life, but I used to really like the crazy ones. I guess I thought they were exciting.

Do women identify with your work more strongly than men?

Actually, I've been pleased that the response has been pretty even. I thought that maybe girls would be able to relate to it more since I'm a girl. It's interesting to see who likes what characters. Guys *and* girls like the Kerosene Boy, but for some reason a lot of boys are drawn to Cotton, who is Ruby's sidekick animal friend.

Perhaps they'd all like to be Ruby's little superhero.

You think so? I wouldn't blame them. He would be a real amazing creature to be because he can change into other characters. Girls really love Violeta and Ruby, but everyone's gotta love Violeta because she's untamed. She's wild and free.

Is there a significant difference in how men and women approach comic book narratives?

Well, there's two ways to answer that question. One would be to make generalizations like, "Oh guys tend to be a little more aloof and have more superheroes while girls always write about themselves!" For some reason that seems to be true. When I was a kid, I never thought that boys and girls were really different, I got along with both just the same. To me, it didn't make any sense that men and women are really different. It's a real big problem with me, not just with comics, but in art and music as well. Women in art are always called "women artists" and girls in music are "girl bands" and things like that. I just can't relate to that, I mean, it would sound so ludicrous to say "male artist", so why the reverse? I do feel like a lot of women still aren't secure enough with themselves to really get good at what they're doing. I hate to say it, but it's just what I say. I feel like they have these obstacles they need to get over that men just don't have. Men have their own problems too, with getting stereotyped. I guess I'm lucky because I've never felt like, "Oh, I'm a girl. I just can't do that." Never.

Would you eat green eggs and ham?

I have! My mother used to make it every April Fool's Day.

Would you eat green eggs and ham with Leonard Nimoy?

Is he part of the meal or is he the guest?

It's up to you.

[Laughs] Well, I wouldn't want to eat him as a cannibal, but I'd like to dine with him. *In Search Of…* was my favorite show when I was a kid. I still like the hokey shows with ghosts, UFOs, Loch Ness Monster, etc. I just can't get enough of it.

You know those multi-cellular organisms that float and glide over your eyeballs?

Yes.

What was your first reaction when you noticed them? Was it a panic attic? Sheer elation?

That's so funny that you ask that because I was really fascinated with them. I thought those were sky particles.

That you could willfully move about with your gaze?

I thought that it was just part of the sky moving around. Then somehow I realized that they were in my eye and that was kind of a strange feeling. But I kinda liked it, these sort of little tiny Sea Monkeys that lived on the surface of my eye. [Laughs]

Do you sometimes wish that you lived in a state of suspended animation like our Sea Monkey friends?

[Laughing] You mean like in the drawings or the boring ones in the fish bowl?

Well, you know, that you could be powder one minute and be scurrying about the next.

Oh, kinda like freeze-dried. You know, I don't think I'd like to be powder. I don't even like going to the desert, it's so dry. If I go to any desert, except for in Arizona, I think that I'd have a panic attack. Powder would be a bad form for me to take.

How about suspended adolescence?

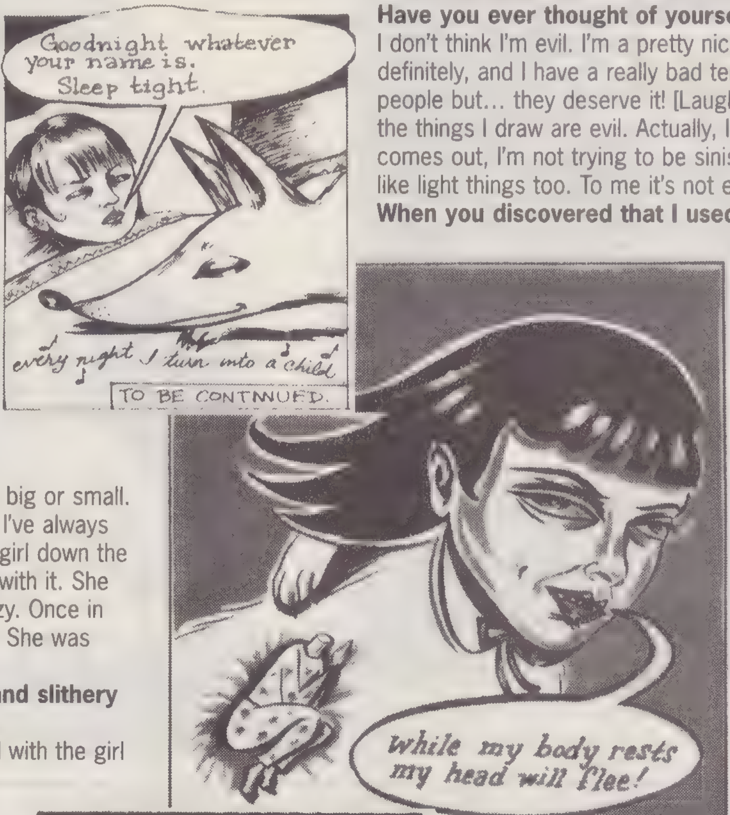
Oh my gawd, that would be sheer hell! Junior high school would be the worst. It was just terrible and I think that I would have to end up doing away with myself.

I was looking at the cover of the last issue and I see this lady peering into a building. Is that a giant lady or just a miniature building?

I don't know!

Are you fond of miniature things?

I like things that are strange sizes, big or small. Like small elephants or big shoes. I've always wanted a dollhouse like the prissy girl down the street from me. She wouldn't play with it. She would just have it. It drove me crazy. Once in awhile she'd allow me to look at it. She was such a priss.


Goodnight whatever your name is. Sleep tight.
every night I turn into a child
TO BE CONTINUED.
While my body rests my head will flee!

Were you obsessed with bugs and slithery creatures in your wee youth?

Yes. There was that one story I did with the girl who had these bugs under glass and they were fighting. That was like me when I was a kid. For a part of my life, my family lived in Sacramento and there were a lot of really good bugs there like Praying Mantis', which are very strange and amazing looking bugs. I'd get those giant mayonnaise jars and put the bugs in them and see what would happen, which were usually not as eventful as I hoped.

Uh, this isn't New York mister, you're dead.

Have you ever tried to get two spiders in a duel?

I tried! Usually they just crawled to opposite sides of the jar!

I was successful getting them to fight. I would get two sizable spiders from neighborhood yards, place them on opposite ends of a stick, and they'd instinctively attack each other.

Really?

Yeah, it was great!

I guess I didn't really have good fightin' bugs.

Material possessions appear to be of great significance in your stories, whether it's their acquisition or lack thereof. Why do you believe this is so?

The material possessions that they have or lose not only stand for what they really are, but also for people just wantin –, this unquenchable desire for people to want more and more, whether it's things or dreams. People wanting and what that means and why they're trying to get them. I am so full of desire for everything that it's caused me so much trouble! [Laughing] It's true! It's like, "Oh, this guy is so beatiful! I want to fly! I want to swim! I want that beautiful dress!" I could go on forever because I just love beautiful things and I've driven myself crazy doing so. I've tried to calm down and not want them, but just appreciate these things just for being there.

Have you ever thought of yourself as evil?

I don't think I'm evil. I'm a pretty nice person. I can be really mean, definitely, and I have a really bad temper and can really lash out at people but… they deserve it! [Laughs] Sometimes people say that the things I draw are evil. Actually, I hear that a lot. I draw what just comes out, I'm not trying to be sinister. I like dark things, sure, but I like light things too. To me it's not evil, it's just balance.

When you discovered that I used an illustration of yours to accompany an article I wrote for *Bunnyhop* without your permission, were you upset? Be honest!

I'm trying to be honest, but the fact is that I have a terrible memory and I don't remember that. I couldn't have been very mad or I would have remembered it. It's possible that I was peeved. [Laughs] Then when I met you, you were so nice I just didn't really care.

Nice and buckling at the knees saying, "Oh, I'm sorry!"

How can I resist that?

From that point on, I knew I was going to get spanked somewhere along the line. Sure enough, in a San Diego golfing range *(at a party pieced together by Kulture magazine to coincide with the San Diego Comic Convention and the Kill Zinesters Tour)*, unwarranted dry humping from Mike Lavella and spanking from several women!

The wind's blowing around all these beautiful treasures and I can't catch any of it!

[Laughing] Well you were asking for it with those crazy gymnastics you were doing!

I wasn't asking for nothing! All I wanted was a little lovin'.

You were doing some crazy dance moves which meant that you wanted a spanking!

What you're saying is that I was being offensive. "You're being an affront to my sensibilities!"

[Laughing] "You call that dancing?! Attack him!"

I'm still unclear as to how many women were spanking me all at once. I think it was at least four.

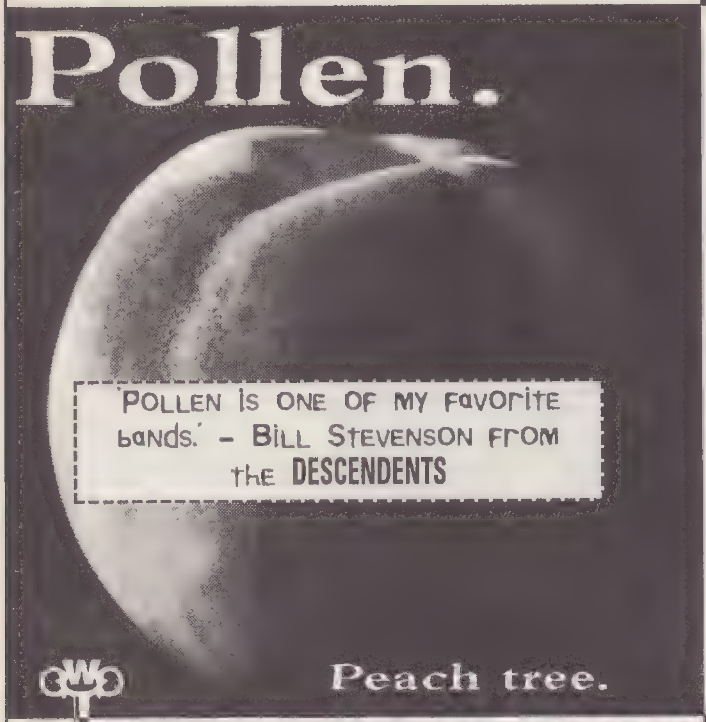
Did you like it?

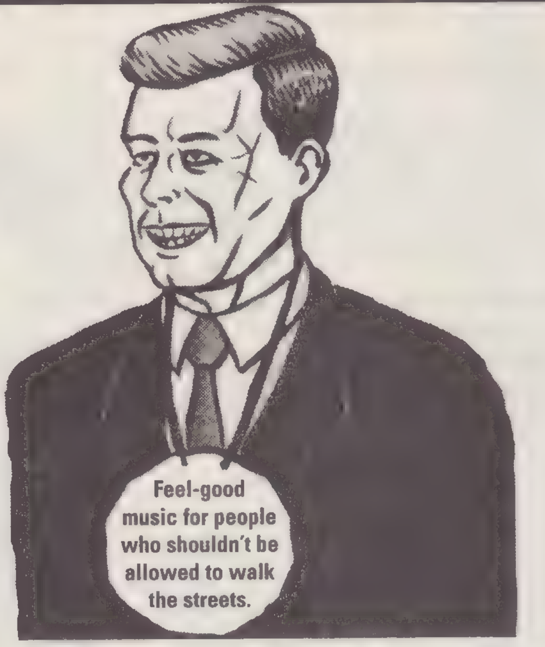
Well, after the dry humping, I was open season.

[Laughing] At least it was dry!

It's about a creature who would later be known as Cotton. –*Blue Hole*

···➤OUT NOW ON Wind-up ◄···


Pollen.
'POLLEN IS ONE OF MY FAVORITE bands.' - BILL STEVENSON FROM the DESCENDENTS
Peach tree.
Wind-up


Feel-good music for people who shouldn't be allowed to walk the streets.

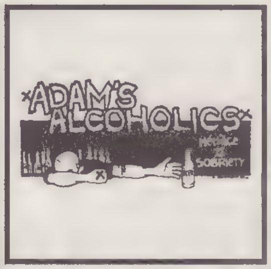
Baboon secret robot control

Hear the bands and get tour info on the WIND-UP ACTION LINE 800.668.1519
CDs $12 ppd in US (Okay, Mexicans and Canadians too) $15 everywhere else. 72 Madison Ave, 8th fl, NYC 10016 www.wind-uprecords.com

MANDINGO
live CD
$10ppd US/$12ppd World

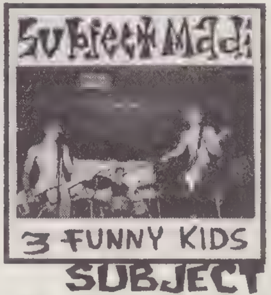
PHOENIX
VS
DENVER
10"/CD
(not actual cover)

"Phoenix vs Denver" comp with unreleased songs by: Mandingo, Adam's Alcoholics, Subject Mad, Dirty Laundry, Pinhead Circus, The Gamits, The Nobodys, and more!!!!!!!
10" $7ppd U.S./$9ppd World
CD $8ppd U.S./$10ppd World



"This is great! Total fucking drunk ass punk music. Really fast & really tight with screamed vocals. These guys sure aren't stuck on being P.C. either."

ADAM'S ALCOHOLICS
"MENACE 2 SOBRIETY" 7"
$3ppd U.S./$4ppd N.A./$5ppd World



Snotty hardcore punk kinda like a mixture of FYP and the Toy Dolls. First 100 on blue vinyl!

SUBJECT MAD
"3 FUNNY KIDS" 7"
$3ppd U.S./$4ppd N.A./$5ppd World

DIRTY RECORDS

PO BOX 6869
GLENDALE, AZ 85312
(602) 938-4063
mike@dirtyrecords.com
http://www.dirtyrecords.com

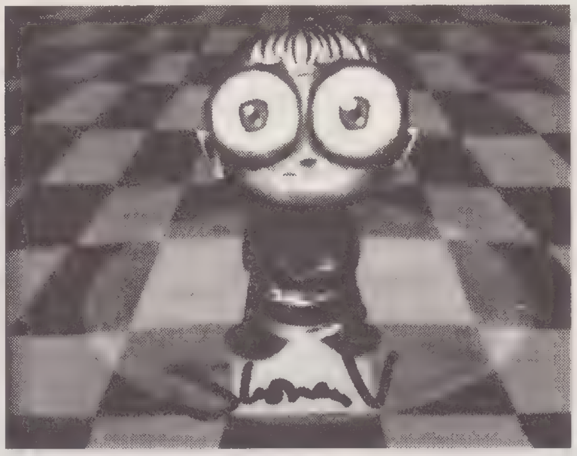
distributed by:
RHETORIC (608) 259-0403
ROTZ (773) 862-6400
CHOKE (773) 395-0809

Anybody who does a zine, radio show or distro please get in touch!

The Torturous World of Jhonen Vasquez

creator of Johnny the Homicidal Maniac

BY SELiNA ROMAO



My friend Eve introduced me to Johnny the Homicidal Maniac. Every day she'd give me the next issue to read. It had been many years since I'd read comic books, and I was hooked. Johnny was not only good looking (yes, I know that he's not real), but he acted out everything I do to stupid people in my head, but can't carry out because…I'm me (not a comic book character). There are many other great characters – besides Johnny, my favorites are: Wobbly Headed Bob (he shares some of my innermost thoughts); Squee (the neglected, frightened little boy who Johnny has a soft spot for); and Anne Ghish (the quintessential insecure, stuck up Goth).

None of them are real, but Jhonen is. He is humorous and well-spoken. His characters are a reflection of how he feels about life and the people in it, but their actions – and reactions – are not. His comics are hilarious because they're based on human stupidity, gone the way of insanity. He does not murder people in his spare time….

In the beginning of your comic, you write stuff down on the inside front cover. Is this the real you, or is it you being Johnny, or is this someone else entirely?

It's me basically playing up to the mood of the current issue. Each issue sort of has a certain tone to it. I comment a bit on things that relate to that particular theme, be it depression or just absolute nonsensical happiness. I think that's the relationship issue. So it has to do with people and dealing with them, but keeping it in the tone of the book. It's supposed to be sort of a supplement to the amusement. It's not me saying, "This is who I am and this is what I do." I get people writing to me saying "Aww, you're feeling depressed. I relate with you, I want to kill myself." I don't want to kill myself! I don't want to do any of these things!

A lot of times you explain to us, "Now, I'm really not going to kill anybody…" Do you feel you have to say that to us because we're not intelligent enough to realize that it's a comic book? Or is it in response to some of the feedback you've gotten?

I do think it's necessary to say that. It's just like with movies and television; even more so with comic books. I get letters from people who think that this is me and this character is me. His motivations would be the same as mine, but his actions are completely different.

When I read it, I like what you're saying, then all of a sudden, you say, "all of this is my opinion," in general, people probably understand that.

Essentially, basically. The book sort of plays off of pretension, sort of a mockery of it.

Then why can't you just leave it like that – without the disclaimer?

Because usually people sort of take what's written as the viewpoint of the person that wrote the book, and I do sort of think ahead to when I actually have to hear from and meet people who read the book. People who are intelligent enough to enjoy the book for what it really is, they can skim over that.

When you were a kid, did you get picked on?

Yeah, I mean that just happens.

In any severe degree?
I never got in any fights. A majority of people just wanted attention. They had a crowd around them, they had their friends. They thought they could be more likable by making fun of someone else. It was never actually anyone trying to inflict any physical harm. Basically it was just verbal abuse.

Was it just in childhood?
All you have to do is leave the house and people will make fun of you. People are so isolated. It's sad, but they'll make fun of anyone that's different from them. It's all been said before. There's nothing new about the idea of being made fun of.

Were you in with the "clique" or were you left out? Or did you want to be left out? Johnny seems to have those feelings... he might want to be "in", but he really doesn't like that whole idea. Is that coming from you personally?
Like I've said to people before, any person that's writing another character... is basing it on themselves or someone that they think is a completely different person than themselves. The idea is that this person that they're creating is still coming from the artist. Every thought is this person's thought – Johnny being a little closer to me than others. As for his reactions to things, he has so much more passion, no matter how ill-directed it is, than I do for a lot of things. So the idea of wanting to belong to a certain clique or this or that, personally I'd rather not have any one around me than to settle for something that just seems *okay*, as far as friends go, just for the sake of being a part of something. As for Johnny, he has sort of the same idea, but he goes a step further in the wrong direction by actually caring enough to hate. He devotes too much attention to something, like a group of people that he doesn't care for, who maybe make fun of him.

And he goes and kills them all in a café?
And all that does is leave room for more people exactly like that because there's always something out there. There will always be a bunch of assholes and fuckers and shitheads...

What you're saying kinda sounds like what you wrote in issue #2 on the inside front cover: "It's so rare to really feel anything from anyone. Connections are difficult. There's an irritation in being among people who've already found their connection, and finding those left that haven't are as undesireable as the void they would be replacing."
Yes.

This one is a lot closer to you then?
Yeah.

Did you ever have any bad nicknames? Did kids ever... was there any feature in you that people...
There was never anything that really stuck. They would always pick different names on the same theme: basically me being really skinny. Actually, the older you get, the stupider the logic gets, it seems. Different connections with appearances. The older I got, the thinner I became – which meant I was "a fag." That's a classic. That's a mark of quality, right there. That's when you know you've made it.

I guess your disgust in humans began as a child and then progressed as an adult?
The more time you have, I guess the older you get, the more faculties of thinking you have to acknowledge... just how sad people are. It's a really easy thing to say that you hate something and that you hate people. That's the easiest thing to do. If it ends there, that's not cool. You're just as sad and as blind as everyone else. You have people just being these primitive monkey people to you. Guys and their testosterone-driven gossipy little crowds.

So there's an overall contempt for them rather than hate?
You have to really respect something to hate it. I don't care enough to hate a lot of things that I'm saying, I just really wish I weren't a part of it. And I am, you know? I'm a horrible thing to someone out there.

Do you hate being a human? [laughs] Because I do.
It's the whole toilet thing.

LARD

Pure Chewing Satisfaction

IN WHICH
JELLO BIAFRA
AL JOURGENSEN
PAUL BARKER
BILL RIEFLIN
AND JEFF WARD
REPRISE THEIR
INFAMOUS ROLES

HEAR US AGAIN FOR THE FIRST TIME!

"PURE CHEWING SATISFACTION" LP/CD/MC - APRIL 1997

DICKS 1980-1986

DICKS / Dicks 1980-1986
Legendary Texan punks with a retrospective anthology of their all-too-brief history. Includes their singles, various album tracks and live material.
Virus 200 CD: $12.00

HALF JAPANESE / Bone Head
Led by JAD FAIR and with a distinguished 20 year career under their belt, we're proud to offer this brand new 20-song studio album.
Virus 197 LP: $8.00 / CD: $12.00

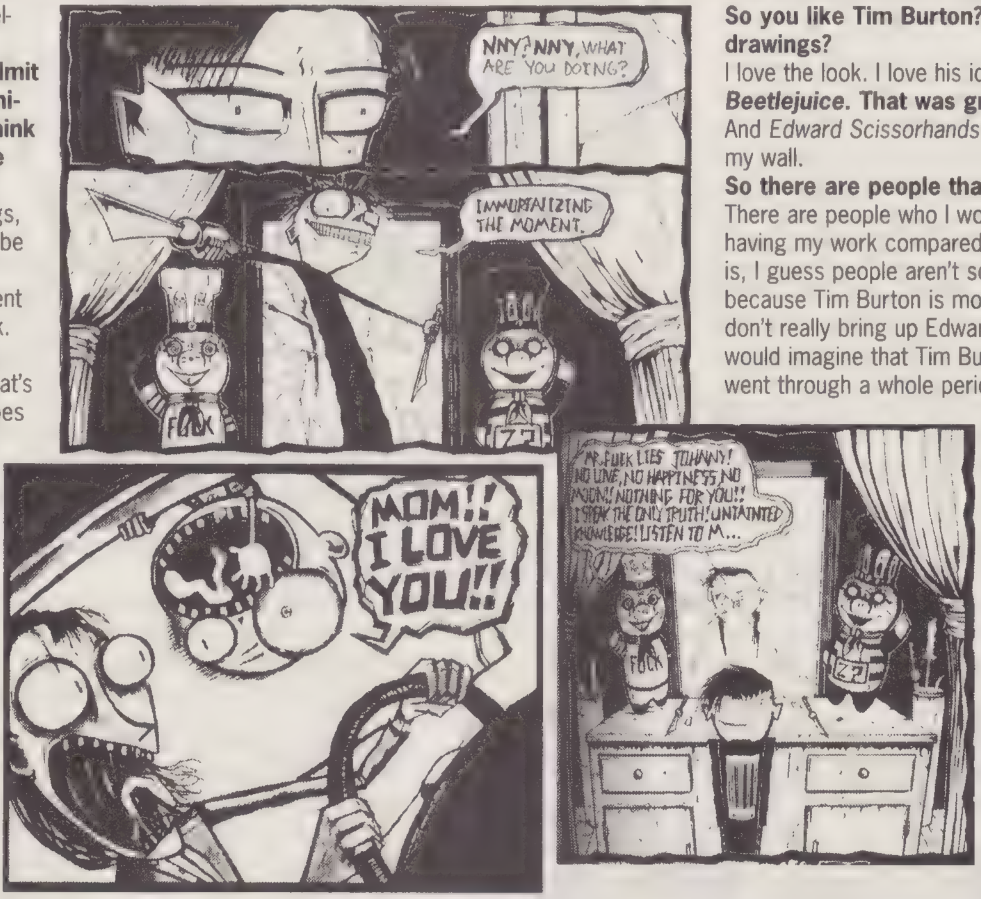
DEAD AND GONE / God Loves Everyone But You
The East Bay's "Boys In Black" return with their sophomore album. Most unique sound to come out of Gilman Street since Neurosis.
Virus 191 LP: $8.00 / CD: $12.00

ZEN GUERRILLA Invisible "Eftee" Pad/Gap-Tooth Clown
Reissue of 2 EP's from these black and blues-gone-bad rock'n'rollers. LP version features deluxe limited edition hand-screened packaging.
Virus 195 LP: $8.00 / CD: $12.00

ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES RECORDS
P.O. Box 419092, San Francisco, CA 94141-9092, USA.
[illegible]
[illegible]

Toilet thing?
Yeah, being an organic organism. Redundant.

Sometimes I'll go, "God, I hate humans!" And then I'll turn around and do something so human. It's hard not to. [laughs]
People aren't aware of just how stupid they're being. And I think "human" isn't such a bad term as far as being applied to behavior or just enjoying things and knowing when you've fucked up. Knowing when you hurt somebody's feelings.


NNY? NNY, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
IMMORTALIZING THE MOMENT.
FUCK
Z7
MOM!! I LOVE YOU!!
MR. FUCK LIES JOHNNY! NO LOVE, NO HAPPINESS, NO VISION! NOTHING FOR YOU!! I SPEAK THE ONLY TRUTH! UNTAINTED KNOWLEDGE! LISTEN TO M...
FUCK
Z7

The ones that don't admit that people are just animals. The ones that think that humans are some superior being.
Some *are* superior beings, and some might as well be on leashes or thrown in cages. They're no different than monkeys. They fuck. They kill. They eat. They shit. They fart, belch. That's as far as enjoying life goes for them. If something's in their way, they beat it up.

When was the last time you bled?
A few nights ago. I had a bloody nose. I just got out of the shower and was wiping my face, and there was blood...

Have you tried Pillsbury Crescent rolls?
Yeah.

You like them?
Yeah. I collect Pillsbury Dough Boys. I've always been into them. I have two big giant Styrofoam ones – store displays. When the display time was up, I asked them "please" and got to take them home and paint them.

So where does this love of Pillsbury come from?
I just like the design, I think they're cool.

There's not some kind of fetish thing going on then?
No, no he just makes good muffins.

On your cake, do you like white frosting or chocolate frosting?
White. Chocolate's heavy.

Do you like to have sex with girls who are on the rag?
Uhhh, I don't think so. I don't know. I'd rather not answer that.

That was my sister's question.
You're sister is quite a woman.

Oh, she *is* quite a woman, she threw a couple in here that she's making me ask you.
Might your sister be on the rag at the time she was asking these questions?

She probably was. Do you have any weird habits while you draw?
I just like to sit there in my room. Turn on some music, no television.

So you don't have any strange rituals?
I just sit in my room with my little doughboys surrounding me. I don't strip down naked and cover myself in...

Awww. That ruined everything. Where did the rabbit come from? The bunny, I mean?
That just showed up in the first issue. When that page came around, I just drew a bunny with a nail in him.

What type of situation do you feel most comfortable in?
I like driving around, after having done a page at three in the morning. Through the hills, listening to loud music on a clear night.

Do you believe in aliens?
Yeah. We exist. We're aliens to somebody.

Do you think they look the way you draw them? (laughs)
Legless, floating around in those little porta-potties? I don't know. But I'd really love to tell you when I find out.

Do you base some of the characters on your friends?
Yeah, just a couple of times so far.

I'm sure you've heard this before, and I know you probably did a lot of these before the movie, but it reminds me a lot of *The Nightmare Before Christmas* – it's got that look.
I get the whole Tim Burton thing a lot. I don't really aspire to be Tim Burton. This is my own stuff, any comparison can be made. His is a bit more Disney. I despise Disney, but I really love Tim Burton's vision.

You hate Disney? Awww...
The animation is fine and beautiful and all that kind of stuff, but their movies make me retch.

So you like Tim Burton? You like the drawings?
I love the look. I love his ideas for stories.

***Beetlejuice*. That was great.**
And *Edward Scissorhands*. I have posters on my wall.

So there are people that you are...
There are people who I would be flattered by having my work compared to. The weird thing is, I guess people aren't so much into art, because Tim Burton is more known, people don't really bring up Edward Gorey. And I would imagine that Tim Burton at one time went through a whole period of being compared to Edward Gorey.

Who is Edward Gorey?
He's a cartoonist. I don't know much about the man, I just have his books. He does a lot of really gaunt characters, very thin, very beaky-looking. Little girls getting kidnapped by insect gods. Really creepy kind of children's fairy tales. And it's very prevalent in Tim Burton. And in mine. It's a style, it's not limited to any one man, but the ones that are well-known are the ones you get compared to.

I was also comparing Johnny to you. When you walk up those escalators, you walk just like...
Well, I'm my only model. I'm always standing in front of the mirror, ready to pose just to get a look down right. I think a lot of people give their characters their direct features and stuff like that. It's just kind of a self-absorbed thing. [laughs]

Do you ever plan to do TV or movies of Johnny and Wobblyheaded Bob? I love Wobblyheaded Bob. Now Noodle Boy, he annoys the hell out of me...
Mission accomplished! All of these characters I see as animated shorts,

KILLING YOURSELF ISN'T THE ANSWER!

big long movies, or live action feature-length films.

So what about, what's it called?

Sick and Twisted?

Yeah.

Hopefully, if I had something with Johnny... I'd want it to be a high enough quality production to not have to be limited to a Sick and Twisted festival only.

Do you see yourself toning it down for TV or movies?

No. I would really suck if I couldn't do the character with the same feel and same kind of mood, without showing the blood and the actual violence. There is a way to actually make something just terrifying and cool, and just as effective, without gore. Like the movie *Seven*. Very minimal killing. Really no gore. And yet the movie is one of the most genuinely disturbing movies, ever, I think it's beautiful. I could do Johnny without ever showing him plunge a knife into someone's groin and still make it... I would feel horrible if I couldn't do that. If I couldn't manipulate an audience well enough. I'd feel bad if people would say, "Where's the blood?" Though there will always be people out for blood.

Like Hitchcock. Like when he did that shower scene. You know he took a knife and put it into a watermelon to make that sound. That kept me scared for a week. My mother had to sit on the toilet while I took a shower because of that scene. Simple, yet terrifying.

Real hard-core violence I would use only for effect, not just for the sake of gratuitous violence. If there's a scene that would be better and really just work with showing some eyes get gouged after having the entire movie being real concealed and shadowed and stuff, people would remember that... but if the whole movie is people getting mutilated right there in front of the camera, it's horrid.

OH, MY GOD!!
SOMEBODY PUT SHIT IN MY PANTS!
!!!!!!

There's that scene, there's one part in here... the whole shit one...

Shitting in your pants? (Laughs)

What inspired that one?

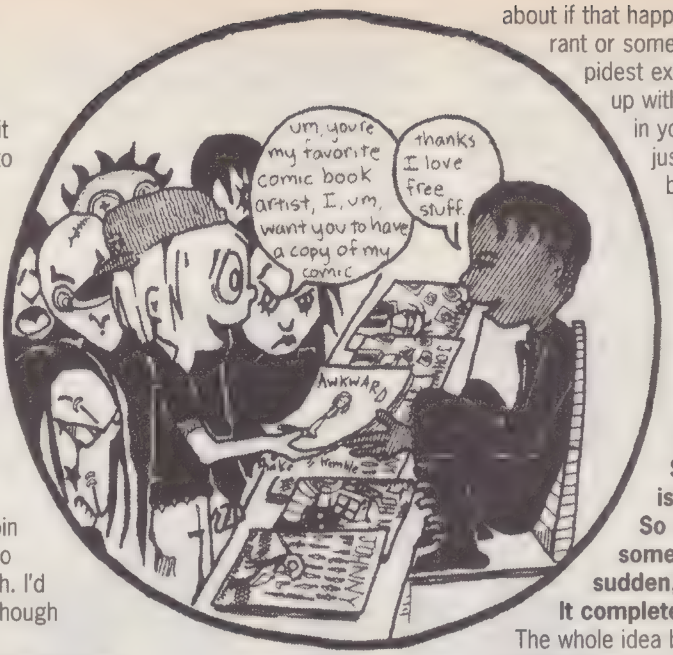
We were just sitting around, talking about embarrassing moments, a friend of mine was telling about some cheerleader – I loved the fact that it was a cheerleader – staying after school for some kind of school spirit meeting, and there was some guy that she really liked. She had to go to the bathroom really bad but she didn't want to go because she wanted to hang out, she wanted to stay around this guy. She recently had diarrhea and she just went in her pants. This was one of the popular girls in school, and I loved it! You just kind of think about if that happened to you in a restaurant or something. What's the stupidest excuse you could come up with if you had taken a shit in your pants? We basically just came up with "somebody put it there!"

My sister wanted me to tell you she loved that one. So in number four: girlfriend real, not real? This whole girlfriend thing?

Oh, that's his diary page. That's Johnny.

So you have no issues with girlfriends? So this isn't you being in some... because all of a sudden, the mood changed. It completely changed.

The whole idea behind that issue was basically just try to be as depressing as a funny book – or *this* funny book, gets. There's always bits and pieces and kibbles and bits.


um, you're my favorite comic book artist, I, um, want you to have a copy of my comic
thanks I love free stuff.
AWKWARD
JOHNNY

ariel (*definition*) meets jhonen

Do you find any similarity between you and Wobbly Headed Bob? Are you as arrogant?

He's basically my arrogant side turned into a character.

And Happy Noodle Boy? Where did the inspiration for that one come from?

I had a friend who would ask me to draw comics for her all the time. I ran out of good ones, so just to shut her up, I created this awful, annoying, badly drawn character, to give her every time she asked me for a drawing. I figured she'd stop asking, but it just took off. I liked it.

So what's up with the schoolyard fights?

Ahh, the crossing guards.

What the hell was that?

There's a little elementary school right by my house and when I drive by I see little kids and the crossing guards in their outfits... I just thought it would be cool to see one of those kids doing really bad mortal combat with these staffs.

Is Johnny going to die?

I'm not going to tell you anything.

If I turn off the tape recorder can you tell me?

No! [laughs]

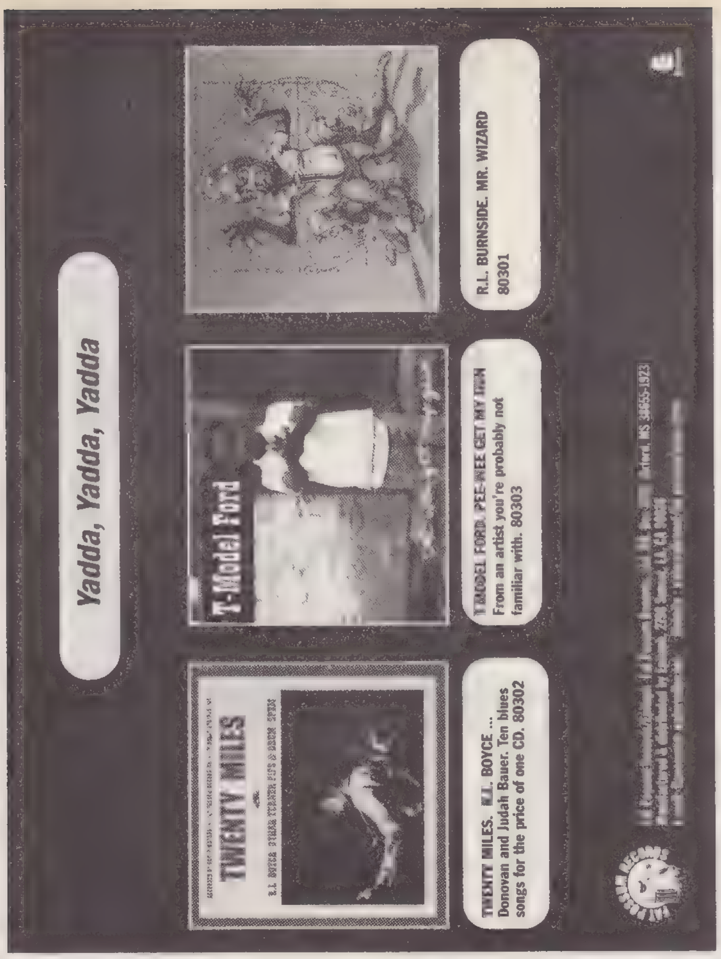
Damn you! I have to end this some way.

Okay. We're all going to die. We're all going to die. Bye.

So Johnny did die, sorta. Obviously you'll have to read it for yourself. In the meantime, Jhonen is working on his spin-off comic, Squee, and has a development deal in the works with Nickelodeon. He's being represented by Toltec Artists (the same folks who work with KlaskyCsupo) who have big plans for him. Stay tuned. If you want copies of Johnny or Squee and can't find it locally, call Slave Labor direct (1-800/866-8929). I hear there are already Jhonen fan clubs on the web, but we'll leave that up to you to surf out.

also, check out his work on the cover of this issue!

Cartooning is fifty years of crap, and people talk as if we've got a heritage behind us. –Frank Miller



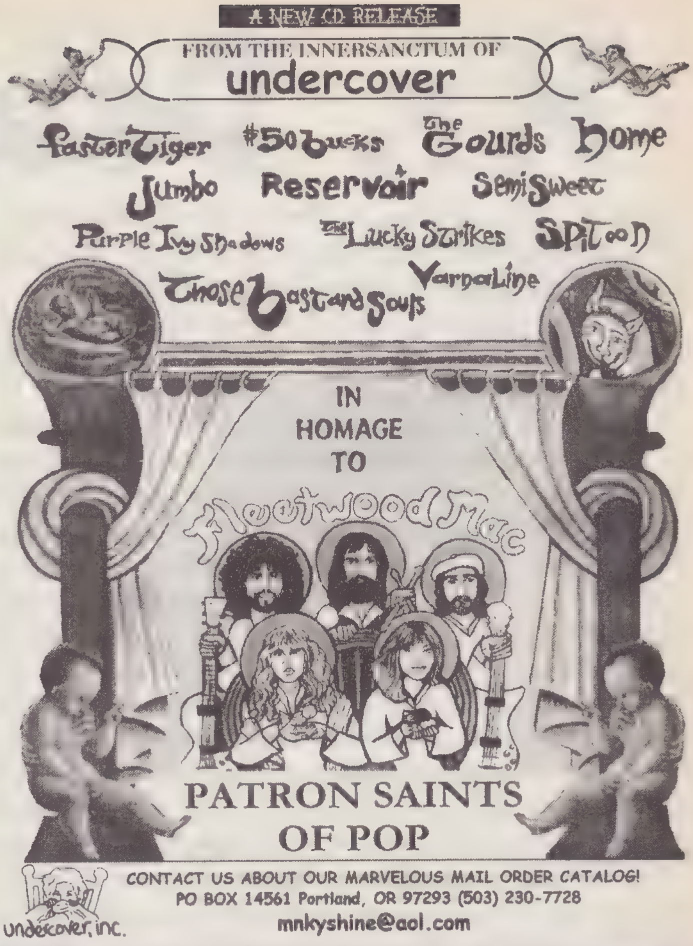
Yadda, Yadda, Yadda

TWENTY MILES. R.L. BOYCE ...
Donovan and Judah Bauer. Ten blues songs for the price of one CD. 80302

T-MODEL FORD. PEE-WEE GET MY GUN
From an artist you're probably not familiar with. 80303

R.L. BURNSIDE. MR. WIZARD
80301

...ford, MS 38655-1923



A NEW CD RELEASE

FROM THE INNERSANCTUM OF
undercover

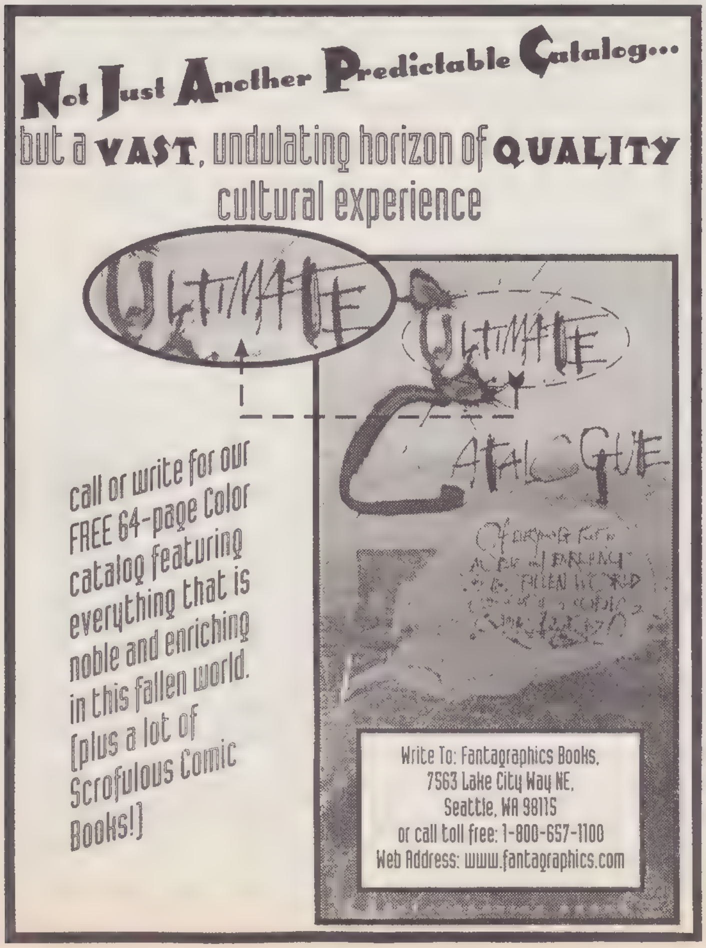
Faster Tiger #50 bucks The Gourds Home Jumbo Reservoir SemiSweet Purple Ivy Shadows The Lucky Strikes Spittoon Those Bastard Souls Varnaline

IN HOMAGE TO
Fleetwood Mac

PATRON SAINTS OF POP

undercover, inc.

CONTACT US ABOUT OUR MARVELOUS MAIL ORDER CATALOG!
PO BOX 14561 Portland, OR 97293 (503) 230-7728
mnkyshine@aol.com



Not Just Another Predictable Catalog...
but a VAST, undulating horizon of QUALITY cultural experience

ULTIMATE

ULTIMATE CATALOGUE

call or write for our FREE 64-page Color catalog featuring everything that is noble and enriching in this fallen world. [plus a lot of Scrofulous Comic Books!]

Write To: Fantagraphics Books,
7563 Lake City Way NE,
Seattle, WA 98115
or call toll free: 1-800-657-1100
Web Address: www.fantagraphics.com

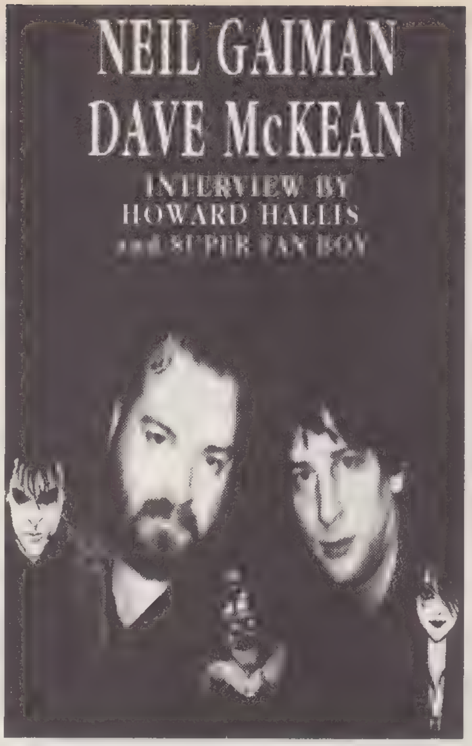
Velvet Blue Music

THE LASSIE FOUNDATION
California CD EP
Medicine meets the Beach Boys.
$8.00

JETENDERPAUL
Kalypso 7" EP
Ultra Melodic Low-Fi Pop.
$4.00

Send well hidden cash, check or money order payable to VBM.

Velvet Blue Music
9121 Atlanta Ave. #237
Huntington Beach, CA
92646-6309



Mr. Death

When I found out that Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean were going to be appearing at Golden Apple Comics in Hollywood, I was determined to get an interview. These two guys, after all, were in my opinion putting out some of the most innovative and creative work within the comic book field today.

It was partly because of sheer fate that this interview happened. Partly because it always helps to name drop "Ben Is Dead Magazine" when you want to meet someone cool, and partly because I was in Cub Scouts with Bill Lebowitz's son (Bill owns Golden Apple).

Anyway, I was really excited to have a one-on-one with these guys. Both of these fellas have worked extensively in the development of DC Comics' Vertigo line, most notably on *Sandman*, where McKean does the covers and Gaiman writes the stories. Dave also does a serialized comic novel called *Cages* and created the Vertigo Tarot Deck (which will be my deck of choice... I'm so fucking death rock!). Neil is one of the greatest fiction writers alive today – I really mean it. These are no silly Archie and Veronica tales he's spinning. They are rich with knowledge of mythology, magical lore, intricate plot development that would have impressed Bill Shakespeare, and a cast of characters that include personifications of Death, Dream, Delirium, Despair, Desire, Destiny, and Destruction. He has written a very funny novel entitled *Good Omens*, has a collection of short stories called *Angels and Visitations*, and recently had a series on the BBC called *Neverwhere* air to rave reviews.

When I met these guys, they were on the publicity tour for their new book *Mr. Punch*, which examines the nightmare world of a young boy growing up amidst circus performers and sinister puppets. That description is probably not doing it justice, so I recommend you check it out yourself. Now, Golden Apple usually gets REALLY busy when big comic book celebs come to town, so I was told that the interview would only be able to last half an hour. Pity. I like it when people can take their time, and I had a lot of questions. Another lame factor also came up... I would be doing a "joint interview" with some other schmuck from a campus (University of Irvine) radio station. Such are the trials of an underground journalist.

So this guy comes into the tiny room where we are waiting patiently for Dave and Neil to arrive, and starts pompously trying to test my knowledge about how familiar I am with their work. I realized right away that he was one of those bozos who goes to comic book conventions every week and revolves his whole life around cataloging and preserving his collection of *Star Trek* video tapes. Super Fan Boy. He asks to see my questions I have prepared, and starts criticizing me that a lot of them might be "too personal" and not very professional journalistic inquiries. Of course, he should know... this guy was an illustrious "guest interviewer" on a college radio station and I was only a measly contributor to a magazine with international distribution. About that time, Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean arrived in the room and Super Fan Boy started the interview with an utterly brilliant and insightful inquiry into the mind of the creative artist:

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS ARTICLE:
NG = Neil Gaiman
DM = Dave McKean
BID = Ben Is Dead = me, Howard Hallis
SFB = Super Fan Boy (or Daniel)

SFB: What are your favorite Beatles songs?

NG: I think my favorite Beatles song is probably "Across The Universe" when done by Laibach.

Oooh! What a great answer! Super Fan Boy was twitching in his seat! I don't think they play Laibach very much at comic book conventions – I wondered what his journalistic savvy and on the spot improvisation dare to uncover next?

SFB: Ever hear Roger Waters' version of that?

NG: Ugh! No!

SFB: *[Obviously disturbed that Neil does not appear to be a fan of Pink Floyd or any of their incarnations]* **What does THAT mean?**

NG: That means that I have problems with Pink Floyd. That's the Hollywood way of saying things. In Hollywood you say: "We kind of have a problem with that." That kind of implies that it's your fault. I actually went to a Pink Floyd concert about three or four months ago because I discovered to my surprise that one of my oldest friends had just gotten married to David Gilmore.

SFB: [Very impressed] A friend of yours is married to David Gilmore?!?

NG: Yeah, my friend Polly Sampson. I ended up getting dragged to the big arena tour. It was a lot like... you were too young to remember the Nuremburg rallies... [Laughs]

Now it was my turn. How could I ever hope to compare with my interview partner's impressive probing?

BID: What's the strangest dream you've ever had?

NG: The most memorable one is still one that haunts me. I actually wrote about it in a *Sandman*. When I was about four or five I had this dream where I was trapped in this enormous house filled with witches who wanted to kill me. One witch was vaguely my friend, but it was filled with just running through this house trying to escape, and eventually making it up to the roof. I thought I was safe, but the roof started to tilt. I was catapulted down and was headed toward the ground. I knew if I hit the ground, I was gonna die. And I knew if I hit the ground I would also die in real life. Somehow I managed to wrench myself out of the dream, but not into a state of waking. It was like the screen went blank. I was lying there trapped inside my head, perfectly certain that if I didn't manage to wake myself up I would go back to the dream and I would die. I was convinced I was trying to scream, but maybe was just moaning a little bit in my sleep. Eventually I woke up with the pillows soaked.

SFB: Why is it that dreams can evoke emotions you never knew you had? Like different aspects of fear and strange emotions that you hardly ever feel in real life?

NG: I think dreams dredge up an awful lot of things. They plug into things very directly. (To Dave) What was that dream that you had the second day of the tour after we had signed things for about a thousand people? Where you were murdering...

DM: We were signing and signing and signing, and they kept saying over the

PA that the police were here and they wanted to talk to me. I knew I had murdered somebody. I kept on making excuses, but I knew they were going to get me in the end. That's a common one. I always have these things when we're signing. Every time we've got a book coming out, I always dream that I go into the publishers and they show me the proofs and I start looking through and there's all these other pages in there that I'm sure I didn't do. Then I call Neil and he tells me he's included some old *Flash* comics in there. So I kept on going through it and this book was like 7000 pages long. Then I get to the cover and it wasn't the cover I did. Someone in the art room had drawn something in crayon and printed that instead and hoped that I wouldn't mind. It was all going terribly wrong.

BID: How does Love interplay in the world of The Endless?

NG: Love isn't quite Desire. Desire is something else. Love is probably a little bit in the Sandman's domain. Love is partly a dream. It's partly to do with Desire. Sometimes it's partly to do with Death as well. It's also very often something to do with Delirium. When you walk around going "HeY I'M iN LovE AnD thE WhOLe WOrLD iS WoNdErFuL!" Then you sort of wake up.

BID: Could you see Love as being personified in the same way that Dream and Death...

NG: No. Because Love is something odder and cleaner, and like I said, moves from domain to domain. The lines between The Endless are not perfectly clear-cut anyway, but Love is definitely something that swims from person to person. Sometimes it's a dream.

SFB: Your work seems to be about stories. Even including Miracle Man. What a story is, how we use stories, what a story might consist of... Do you see yourself primarily as a storyteller rather than a writer?

NG: I'm a writer rather than a storyteller because writing allows you to get it right in your own time. It also allows you to reach a very large audience. But I love storytelling.

SFB: What is the function of the story in our world today?

NG: I don't know. I don't necessarily believe stories have functions any more than diamonds have functions or the sky has a function. Stories exist and they keep us sane. We tell each other stories. We believe stories. I love watching the slow rise of the urban legend. They're the stories we use to explain ourselves to ourselves.

DM: Stories, like art, feed our consciousness.

SFB: Is that the function of what art is then?

DM: Humans, unlike any other thing on the planet, need art.

BID: You said in *Gnosis Magazine* that when Thessaly (a character in *Sandman* who indulges in witchcraft) "brought down the Moon", that it was an incredibly bad idea. Do you know how to do this?

NG: No. No. What I was trying to do there was look at the concept of drawing down the moon from the viewpoint of contemporary Greek and Roman writers on the witches of Thessaly. Because there's a lot of stuff in Laocoon, in Virgil and Apileus about the witches of Thessaly, and they were terrified of them. One of the things they kept accusing them of doing was drawing down the moon and drawing down the stars for their own ends. Taking the stars and the moon out of the sky and ordering the moon about. I liked the way that I kind of plugged into the contemporary "Calling down the moon for empowerment" ceremonies. I wanted to see what the reactions of today's contemporary pagans and wiccans would be when confronted with a Thessalian witch from 400 B.C. The reaction from most of them was: "Eew! We don't want to know about that kind of thing!"

BID: How extensive is both of your knowledge of the occult? Do you guys get involved in that in any way at all?

NG: Only by default. Dave doesn't at all. I tend to attract occulty people, occulty things and occulty books. I had a very odd conversation in a bar in Denver with a lady who came over and informed me that she provided herbal extracts for Wiccan and pagan communities all over the world. I said, "I make up people like you." She said, "You make fun of us?" and I said, "No. I don't make fun of you. I wouldn't dare! But I do make you up." I think my perspective on magic is very much the perspective I expressed in *Gnosis Magazine*, and to some extent probably in *The Books of Magic*. I like the entirety of magic. I love reading magical stuff, but I have no desire to do the route that someone like Alan Moore is doing.

> Nobody should be asked to barbecue their own baby. Nobody should be asked to marinate it and cut up its little fingers. Nobody should be asked to be at the other end of the phone when Hollywood rings up and says: "Hey Neil...are you sitting down? Cuz hey, I've got news for you guy! OK. You ready? We got Arnie! Arnie is "Dream"! Hey, it's casting against type, but Michael Keaton did Batman!" I don't want to be there for that call.

SFB: The contemporary shaman.

NG: Yes, a contemporary shaman. An elegant warlock. He's huge and hairy and he looks the part. He's probably conducting magical ceremonies even as we speak and having a wonderful time doing it. Personally, I like being a writer which allows me to simultaneously believe and not believe in anything I want to.

SFB: So you wouldn't care if someone would prove it to be true. If someone said: "Here it is, I'm holding the proof in my hands...

NG: I would find that very upsetting in some ways. One of the worst headlines I ever saw in my life, my heart sank, was a headline in the Sun newspaper which I saw in England, that read: WEREWOLF CAPTURED IN SOUTH END. That was the front page story. I was really upset because even before I read the story I thought, "I don't want anybody to capture a werewolf!" If you capture a werewolf, then you're only allowed one truth at that point. I want complete plurality of options. I don't want anybody to capture a unicorn. I don't want anybody to capture a werewolf. Actually I think it was some man who had gone mad on pills and attacked a police station. But I want a plurality of possible truths.

SFB: What is it that drives you?

NG: One of the things that really drives me is the desire to get it right.

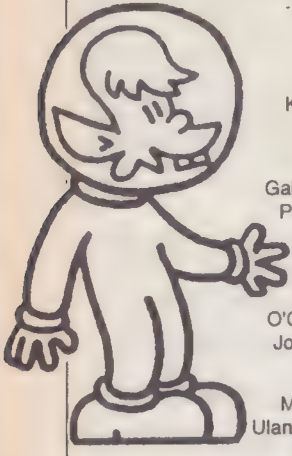
SFB: What's it like when you do get it right?

NG: Haven't known it yet. A little bit on *Mr. Punch*. This was the first time that I really felt that the thing that I wanted to do in my head when I started is there in the book. The end. I don't feel any urge to apologize, which I normally do when I finish something. It's usually like I could have gotten it right if there were a few more pages, if I had a little more time. That you could have gotten it closer to the vision. You could have gotten it closer to the platonic ideal that was in the back of your head when you started. *Mr. Punch* was. That really did it. It's also the force of the story that drives me through the story. I will start off with a couple of characters. I will start of with a scene, with a notion. Then I'll want to know what happens next, which is the ultimate story telling urge anyway. What happens next? Then what did they do? It's the multi-force behind *The Arabian Nights*.

SFB: Is there some point when the act of creation is happening and you feel it happening, like flowing through you? There's a Zen attitude about stepping out of the work's way and letting it go through you...

NG: Yeah, but if you're a working writer, which I am, seeing that for the last 12 years I've been doing this, there're a few things I've discovered. One of which is: Those moments of Zen Creation are all very nice, but if you're going to wait for them to happen, then you will have a very small outlook. And the other, which is stranger and sadder and I don't like, but is my own personal observation, is that I can have moments of Zen Creation and have a wonderful time writing, and then get in a really bad mood and have a vague headache and really not want to write and go, "Oh, screw it. I have to get this done." Then, six months later I'll go back and re-read the story and I can't tell which bits of it were written at the moment of Zen Creation with the Godhead pouring through me and which bits of it were wrenched out of me like a dentist pulling out a wisdom tooth. You can't tell. It's all the whole.

About now I started to get a little pissed that this guy was hogging the questions and asking such pretentious stuff. Don't get me wrong, I can do the same thing sometimes, and the answers he was getting were eloquent and interesting, but I had shit I wanted to ask as well. I tried opening my mouth to speak but was interrupted by yet another one of his tiring inquiries into the creative process... and all the while Dave and Neil were answering, Fan Boy was going "Yeah." "Uh Uh." "Oh." "Yeah." "Right." I wanted a gun. I wanted Delirium to come and make him think he had tiny



"These guys have great taste in picking the finest in underground comic artists. But they don't stop there, they assemble it all into nicely printed books that you want to keep around and re-read for years to come. So much good stuff in here."

- R. Seth Friedman, FACTSHEET 5

* Issue #1
Tom Hart, Ulana, James Kochalka, Josue' Menjivar, and more!

* Issue #2
Gabby Gamboa, Ribs!, John Porcellino, Gavin McInnes, Garret Izumi, and more!

* Issue #3
Jeff Johnson, FLY, Mitch O'Connell, James Kochalka, Josue' Menjivar, and more!

* Issue #4
Marc Bell, Josue' Menjivar, Ulana, Mike Diana, Lin Lucas, Matt Madden, and more!

(drawing by James Kochalka © 1996)

TOP SHELF
comics & picture cocktails

Individual copies are $5 each, postpaid. Or get all four for $15, postpaid from: TOP SHELF PRODUCTIONS, PO BOX 15125, PORTLAND, OR, 97293- 5125.

NAME
ADDRESS

Order today! With check, money order or well concealed cash.

Bob Koenig
PROSE & ICONS

CPD-8201

You could say, blah, blah, blah or this, that and the other thing. But whatever it may be, know that it's a great record.

RECORDS

For a Free Catalog or to Order, Call or Write:
416 Wilson Blvd. Mineola, NY 11501
(516) 746-5221

invisible bugs crawling all over him for the rest of forever.

SFB: Dave, when you are working on a painting, are you trying to get it right? Are you trying to achieve an unobtainable goal?

DM: I suppose so. It's just a dialogue, really. It's like a good conversation. In the big picture, you're back to belief. Believing in things. What you need to get you through. I've never had any time for the occult or any of that, but I'm really interested in WHY people have a need to believe in those things. I think we all find our own gods.

I don't necessarily believe stories have functions any more than diamonds have functions or the sky has a function. Stories exist and they keep us sane. We tell each other stories. We believe stories. I love watching the slow rise of the urban legend. They're the stories we use to explain ourselves to ourselves.

Fan Boy then went on about how Dave McKean's Cages *is like a "search for meaning" and questioned him further on this type of existential rant. The brief half hour was coming to a close and I was just imagining this guy going back to his pimple faced buddies in Irvine and telling them how "deep" and "insightful" the whole experience was. I could taste his blood on my lips and pondered the idea of setting him ablaze over a slow burning fire. Finally I got the chance to ask another question.*

BID: Have you done a lot of psychedelics and have they affected your work at all?

NG: I never have. In that respect I'm fairly unique amongst the British comic writers. I know Grant, Alan, Jamie and Pete were all heavily into psychedelics. I'm not, partly because half a spoon of monosodium glutamate will take me out...

I tend to attract occulty people, occulty things and occulty books. I had a very odd conversation in a bar in Denver with a lady who came over and informed me that she provided herbal extracts for Wiccan and pagan communities all over the world. I said "I make up people like you." She said "You make fun of us?" and I said, "No, I don't make fun of you. I wouldn't dare! But I do make you up."

SFB: Am I right in assuming that *Mr. Punch* is the second part in a sort of comics biography of your childhood?

NG: Yes. There may be another one. It's part of a sequence. It's definitely not a sequel. We know what the next one will be.

Fan Boy then asks if there will be two more, as he read somewhere, and determined that the overall theme was looking to be one of violence. Neil asserted that to him they were essentially about childhood and our perceptions of childhood. I was thinking that I could show this guy what real violence would do.

BID: Are there any plans in turning *Sandman* or any of your other projects into a movie?

NG: *Good Omen* was almost a movie, but the movie company, thank God, went under. *Sandman* is currently in the early stages of development. It has two screenwriters and a big executive producer.

BID: Who do you see as playing "The Endless"? I have some suggestions...What about Trent Reznor as "Dream"?

NG: He's a bit short, isn't he? I don't know. There's a level in which films are concerned where I tend to really want to stay out of it. Tori Amos would make a great "Delirium".

BID: David Bowie as "Destiny"?

NG: I've never really thought of that! I think Sean Connery is "Destiny"... he would be great.

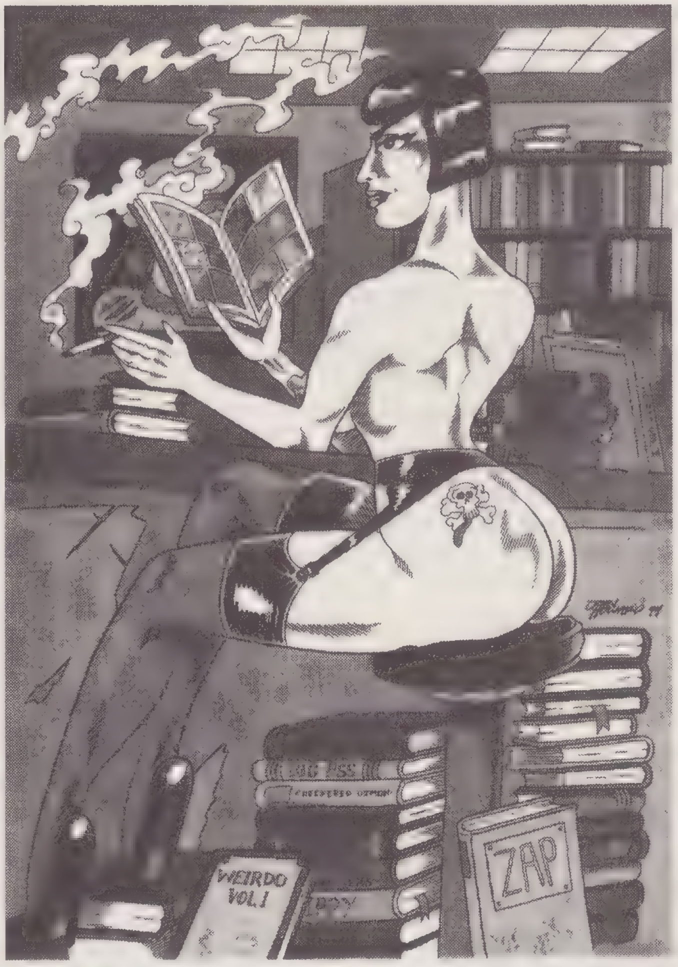
BID: What about Winona Ryder as "Death"? Even though everyone would probably go ape shit about it. She'd probably have to prove herself as an actress like Tom Cruise did in the *Vampire* movie just to please the die hard fans...

NG: She's a remarkable actress and I'm sure she could do it. I don't know. Bear in mind that you're dealing with Hollywood and this huge, strange entity that really doesn't quite know what it's doing. There are two screenwriters involved that seem to have the right idea. There is an executive producer involved who doesn't particularly... but I have elected to stay out of it. If you get involved you can get hurt. Quite seriously, this is my baby. It's something I've been living with for seven years. Nobody should be asked to barbecue their own baby. Nobody should be asked to marinate it and cut up its little fingers. Nobody should be asked to be at the other end of the phone when Hollywood rings up and says: "Hey Neil...are you sitting down? Cuz hey, I've got news for you guy! OK. You ready? We got Arnie! Arnie is "Dream"! Hey, it's casting against type, but Michael Keaton did Batman!" I don't want to be there for that call. Maybe it will be a great movie and maybe it won't. If it isn't a great movie I wouldn't have been around getting hurt, if it is a great movie, then of course I'll take all the credit!

The interview ended there and it's been about two years now since it happened. (This Comix Issue of Ben Is Dead has been in the works for quite some time folks.) The movie still hasn't happened, but it's apparently in the works too. Genius takes time. I got to hang out with Mr. Gaiman once more since then. We went out to Book Soup and had dinner. I brought my girlfriend with and he said she looked like Death.

The ZAP Experience

by Stymie Baldwin



The cruel heat of a July evening is pounding down on Melrose Avenue as I lead my friend Gretchen into the La Luz de Jesus Gallery's show of the latest (and possibly last) issue of *Zap* comix. The place is packed, literally belly-to-belly with tattooed hipsters of all ages, and it's at least 50 degrees hotter in this stew of trendy flesh than it is on the pavement outside. Through one particularly dense mob I can glimpse the forlorn-looking figure of R. Crumb, and I am amazed, as all of his readers are, upon meeting the man, on how grotesquely he resembles one of his bitter, repressed, cross-hatched characters, complete with a vintage 1930s suit and tie. He is flanked by his wife, Aline "Honeybunch" Kominsky, and Gilbert and Jaime Hernandez, killer cartoonists in their own right who are apparently serving tonight as Crumb's bodyguards. I burrow through the crowd until I'm near enough to ask for an autograph, but Crumb is occupied holding court on his favorite topics (Blues, sex and comics), and the longer I wait, the more anxious I get. The next thing I know Gretchen is talking to Crumb, and with the pure heart of the truly clueless, she proceeds to tell him in long, excruciating detail how I'm his biggest fan, and how I'm so honored to meet him. Finally Crumb turns on me with eyes of hate.

CRUMB: You her friend?
STYMIE: Uh... what?
CRUMB: Are you her friend?
STYMIE: Yeah. Uh...
CRUMB: You got something for me to sign?
STYMIE: Yeah. Right here.
CRUMB: Well, let's have it. (Signs.)
STYMIE: You must be roasting in that suit.
CRUMB: It wouldn't be so bad... if there was just room to *breathe* in here.
STYMIE: Yeah... Well, uh, thanks. Thanks for a *lot* of great stuff.

I shake Crumb's hand; it's light and dry and brittle, like a mummy's. Aline drifts off, then an intrepid female fan with a physique just like the chubby amazons in Crumb's comics arrives on the scene, and for the next few minutes she flirts with Crumb. He acts very accustomed to this sort of attention. After she is gone, Crumb makes a comment...

CRUMB: (Watching her go.) Man... bag the face, and fuck the rest.

The swirling crowd leads me away, and I take the opportunity to check out the artwork on display. It's generally not the most impressive *Zap* of the last few years, but there's still some mighty fine work, and it's overall a fitting tribute to Rick Griffin, the *Zap* artist who died recently. I'm amazed how little white-out these guys use in their pieces, with the exception of evil genius S. Clay Wilson, who practically paints with the stuff. Most of the artists seem too crowded to approach, although I do drift near enough to neo-surrealist Robert Williams to notice the spectacular cakes of dandruff on the back of his black jacket. He is talking to a flawlesss, mammoth-breasted Asian girl who is wearing a cheesey lace top and no bra... You can see her nipples thrusting through her flimsy garment, and Williams looks like he very much appreciates her presence. For Williams' sake, I hope *she* doesn't notice all that dandruff.

The next morning Darby, whom we all know and love, wakes me up with a call offering me the opportunity to go interview the *Zap* guys. I have no questions prepared, but Darby assures me that she and her friend Gwynne will do most of the talking. I speed up to the La Luz De Jesus to meet them, and when they show up I tell them about the groupie girl who was all over Crumb the night before, and what he said about her, until suddenly I realize that the groupie girl was in fact none other than Gwynne herself. Ouch. I shut up in a hurry, and try to change the subject before Gwynne has a chance to think about it, but talking to the girls I quickly see that they don't have a single question prepared, and it's pretty much up to me to come up with something – anything to ask the *Zap* guys on short notice. I begin to panic, but Darby presses me forward into the gallery towards my appointment with doom. The crowd is blessedly sparse today, and all of the *Zap* artists but Crumb are sitting at tables patiently signing copies of *Zap* #13. I find myself approaching the always scary S. Clay Wilson with Darby's tape recorder in my hand and without a single question in my head.

STYMIE: Hi... Uh. How do you feel about the last *Zap*? Are you sad to see it go?

WILSON: *(Didn't hear the question.)* Sad to see who go? I liked Rick Griffin a lot. I loved the man, but he's dead. Is that the question?

S: No, no. I was asking about the last *Zap*.

WILSON: I like it. What's not to like, huh?

S: [Laughs] Uh... about your comics... How cathartic are the things you draw?

WILSON: How cathartic for you or for me? I gotta do it, otherwise I'll end up in jail. If I did the things I draw I'd end up in jail. It's like channeling. It's art as therapy, you see. My pen is my shrink.

DARBY: So when you get over your problems you won't need it anymore?

WILSON: I don't have any problems. Now I draw them all and somebody buys them and looks at them and then they have the problems. It's kind've purging.

D: But once you draw them all out of you, then what? Then you die?
WILSON: Yeah. Then you die, and you join all the characters you drew, in hell.

S: What kind of music do you listen to?
WILSON: KPFA Berkeley, while I'm drawing. It's a really radical station. Irish music, reggae music, this and that. Just audio wallpaper for while I'm at the drawing board.

S: How much do you feel *Zap* and the other undergrounds have pushed the boundaries of free expression?
WILSON: Well, we're still pushing, as far as I'm concerned. I think the *Zap* stuff is more radical now than it was in the "anything goes" hippie hey-days. Now everything's uptight, you can't do anything. You can't fuck unless you're willing to die. You can't drink, you can't smoke, you can't do this or that...

GWYNNE: Don't you think, in a way, things are more lenient now? You can say "asshole" and "piss-off" on the radio...
WILSON: Actually you can't. We were on a Jesuit radio station and "dick" slipped out [laughter] and they were like no, no, no! It's the FCC, you know...

G: I worked at a radio station about 10 years ago, and you couldn't say the word "piss" in any context.
WILSON: It's opening up in some areas, but it's real uptight in other areas – Now if you smoke a cigarette you can go to jail. You say person instead of woman. It's nuts. I've had my work burned in Canada. I've had my work received and burned by the Royal Canadian mounted police and a month later my stuff is being auctioned at Sotheby's... [High-toned voice] Sotheby's, in fucking New York. Figure that out. Over there, they burn it, over here they auction it off as Americana, as archives, whatever.

G: What are your plans now that *Zap* is folding?
WILSON: *Zap* isn't folding, this is just the most current one. We're gonna do it until we're all dead. Until there's only one cartoonist left, and he has to draw the whole issue.

S: We'd heard this was the last one.
WILSON: That's for Mr. Griffin, who's dead.

G: What are you working on now that this is done?
WILSON: For my current project I'm working on Hans Christian Andersen's stories. I've always wanted to be a children's book illustrator. You can see the color pieces in the back room.

D: Are they going to be okay for children to read?
WILSON: Well, yeah... well... We'll see.

D: Will they be able to buy them in Canada? *(Laughter)*
WILSON: We're trying to hit both sides. My neighbor's daughter posed for the little match girl. Then I gave her parents the new *Zap*, and they were like, "I don't want that in the house, I don't want the kids to see it!" I said, your daughter's already posed, so...

G: Do you like a group called the Mentors? Have you heard of them?
WILSON: No.

G: They sound like what your art looks like. The singer looks like your character, the Checkered Demon.
WILSON: There's a band called Checkered Demon in Lawrence, Kansas. There's a lot of them. Every guy who weighs over 300 pounds is the Checkered Demon. There's, like, 8,000 of them... but that's okay. Demons can multiply.

S: I've been told that the phrase "Jack Shit," as in, "I can't see Jack Shit," originated in your comics.
WILSON: No, that's like a midwest, Texas slang expression. As a matter of fact, Ken Weaver, who's here, did a book called *Texas Crude*.

G: Ken Weaver? From the Fugz?
WILSON: Yeah. He's a big, bald guy... lots of leather. [*A fan asks for Wilson signature.*] Okay, back to work... but keep asking questions.

D: What do you think are your worst habits?
WILSON: I don't have any bad habits.

D: They're all good?
WILSON: Well, all habits are bad.

Wilson begins to wrestle with a bad pen, and it becomes apparent the interview is over. I look around the room and I see Gilbert Shelton, creator of the hippie heroes, the Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers. I have nothing to say to the man, nothing to ask him, but he seems by far the friendliest of the bunch, so I approach him.

S: So... What's ahead for the Freak Brothers in the '90s?
SHELTON: Oh, more of the same. The next story is going to take place in Amsterdam, the subject being international law enforcement. We haven't really finished writing the story yet.

S: What kind of music do you like?
SHELTON: For listening, I prefer Be-bop, but for playing I prefer Blues and Rock 'n roll.

S: You play?
SHELTON: I play keyboards. I think Be-bop was the high-point of American music.

A Fan: Do you make any money off this?
SHELTON: Oh, yeah. I'm a partner in Rip-off Press.

S: Do you still do a lot of drugs?
SHELTON: <Pause> Well, yeah... a long list of drugs: alcohol, coffee, refined sugar, caffeine, nicotine... marijuana.

S: (Laughs) Yeah, I knew pot would come up eventually. How much do you feel has *Zap* loosened things up?
SHELTON: I think *Zap* and comics like it did a lot. Not just what artists thought that they'd be allowed to do, but it also set up a system of distribution so that the things that were done could be profitable. They could be distributed and sold, rather than hidden. Like, where do you go if you're a fan of little poetry magazines? That's where underground comics would be if they hadn't opened up a new system.

S: So is *Zap* done, now? I'm hearing conflicting reports...
SHELTON: We don't know.

I've run out of questions. Awkwardly I say good-bye to Shelton and wander into the big room, where Darby is trying to finagle an interview out of Robert Williams...

D: Hi! We're from *Ben is Dead*. Could we ask you a few questions?
WILLIAMS: Well... I guess so. But I'm not going to give an interview, if that's what you mean...

Damn. Minutes go by as we in the BID gang discuss our next move in a corner. Williams overhears us griping that Crumb isn't here, and chimes in.
WILLIAMS: I don't blame him. He got mobbed last night, he hated it. We all had to hide in the back room and come out in shifts.

D: So why are you doing it? Just for the benefit (for Rick Griffin's estate)?
WILLIAMS: Because we're nice.

S: Oh, you're nice. Maybe you should get a sign above your head that says, "We're nice, don't bug us."
WILLIAMS: Maybe.

G: Crumb didn't hate it when I came up to him. He jumped on my back and squeezed my face.
WILLIAMS: That's the only benefit he got out of it.

G: I know. These hippies kept wedging themselves between us.
WILLIAMS: That's what you're back for, to get some more squeezin'?
Williams resumes his signing, and I end up in a room where underground legends Victor Moscoso and Manuel "Spain" Rodriguez are signing autographs. I ask Moscoso if I can interview him briefly, and he fixes me with an intimidating, parrot-like stare.

S: I wanted to ask about your influences...
MOSCOSO: When I was a kid I loved comics, like all kids love comics. I loved Mickey Mouse, the Warner Brother cartoons...

S: There's obviously a big Disney influence on your stuff...
MOSCOSO: I wanted to go to work for Walt Disney until I found out what he paid and the work that I'd have to do, starting off at the bottom... And then his politics at that time... So I was turned off by Disney then, but I'd already been profoundly impressed by him. But in comics there was the *Vigilante* by Joe Kuper, EC comics, in particular Harvey Kurtzman, *Tales from the Crypt*, *Two-Fisted Tales*, *Wally Wood*, *Johnny Craig*... And then, I guess it was a mistake, but somewhere along the line I stumbled into Fine Art, and then I purged myself of the comics... but since Fine Art didn't pay my bills, I ended up going back to commercial art. When Tim Leary said to turn on, tune in and drop out, well, I dropped out of Fine Art and into commercial art. I stumbled into the psychedelic posters that I did for the Avalon Ballroom, and at that point I realized that Michelangelo was a commercial artist, and I was barking up the

"People just started to take it for granted that all comics were about superheroes... and they don't say, 'what if all TV shows were

Leather, Spikes and Mini Bikes!

DON013 LP/CD

DON008 LP/CD

DON010 LP/CD/CASS

Teen Idols Debut Album Produced by Ben Weasel!

write for free mailorder catalog!

HONESTDON'S • PO BOX 192027 • SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94119

wrong tree. I realized I should've been a commercial artist from the word go. It means you're rewarded in your lifetime, you communicate in your lifetime. Fuck the Van Gogh syndrome! I die and then the paintings go up in value so the collectors can make a ton of money.

S: I guess you'd have the same shot at immortality either way.

MOSCOSO: I've got a better shot at immortality, because I know the collectors care for my work, Van Gogh had no idea.

A break while Moscoso signs autographs. A fan attempts to have him sign an older Zap, but Moscoso will only do it for ten bucks. He explains that he's only signing Zap #13 for free, and he attempts to persuade the fan to buy the signature for its collector value. As more fans come up with old Zaps and posters, Moscoso encourages them to pay for signatures on older Zaps. "You'll be glad you did in the long run," he tells one.

S: What cartoonists out there now do you feel are really good?

MOSCOSO: Jeez, I'd have to give you an enormous list... Charles Burns, Gary Panter, Matt Groenig, the Ninja Turtle guys...

S: You're a big Ninja Turtles fan?

MOSCOSO: No, but I admire them. Anybody who can come up with that much success is doing something right. *(Signs a fan's book.)* Shit, I almost signed '64... I wish! What year is it, '94? I think I got it. *(Strange, mystical voice.)* If the six turned into nine, who would mind?

Fan: How do you like all this attention?

MOSCOSO: I like it fine. At least people aren't sitting here cursing at me. I'm being complemented. I can't say it's painful.

S: What did you think of the first *Zap* when you saw it [Crumb's debut publication that featured only his own work]?

MOSCOSO: It knocked my socks off. What was happening was Rick Griffin and I were planning to – well, does anybody have a copy of *Zap* #4 here at the moment? *(A fan hands one over. Moscoso notices the old price and speaks to the fan.)* 50 cents... Hey, man, this could be first edition... if you buy my signature on here for 50 bucks you could have a $2,000 value in about 10 years at Sotheby's auction. *(Pause as the fan looks uncomfortable. No sale.)* Guess not. *(Laughter)* Wait, it's *Zap* #2 I need... So Crumb did #1, and me and Rick Griffin wanted to do a comic magazine, on slick stock, like our posters, and if you notice here, this is my work, this is Rick's work, and we had a template, which is a thing you run a rapidograph pen around in to get your panel borders, so we had our drawing tables side by side on Olsey street, and I'd do a drawing and Rick would do a drawing, back and forth, and the idea was we'd mix them up into one book... Then we saw *Zap* #1, and what blew me out about *Zap* #1 was the newsprint... We were thinking slick paper, uptown stuff, and with the newsprint it was just like the comics from when we were kids... That, plus Crumb's zany humor and his far out trip... Well, when he invited us into *Zap* #2, me and Rick separated our drawings for it, otherwise these would've all been interspersed. When we saw *Zap* #1, it was like we didn't know what to do. It was like, the bus has crashed, and here we are in a plane that's taking off. It was synchronicity, perhaps.

Across the room Spain tries to catch my ear to explain that but for a printer's error, his comic Zodiac MindWarp *was very nearly the first Underground comic, but I'm distracted by Moscoso in the foreground discussing first edition values with another fan.*

MOSCOSO: I'm all for museums... That's where dead art goes.

S: Do you have any advice for young, beginning cartoonists?

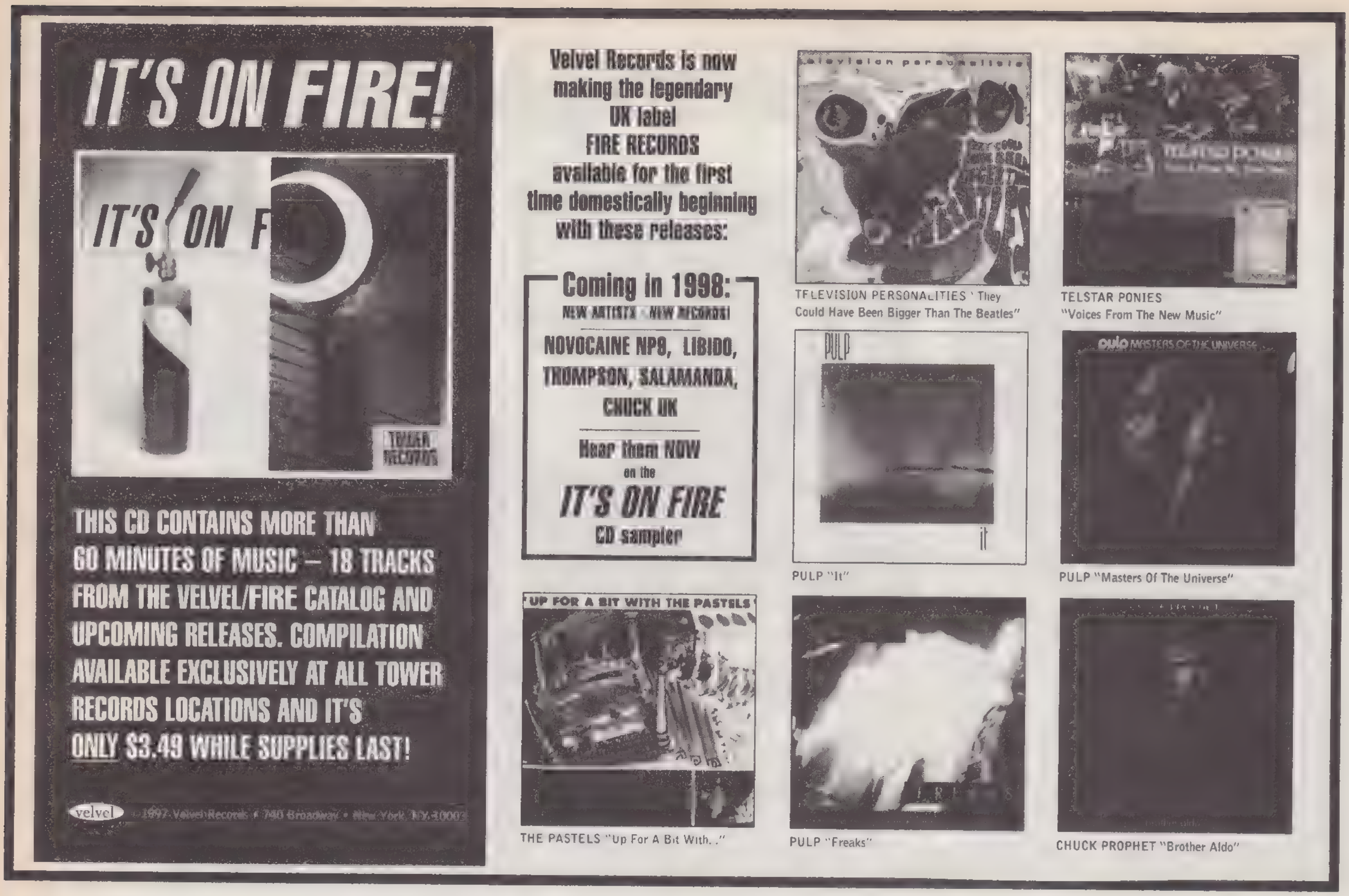
MOSCOSO: Yes, I do. Draw a lot. Keep drawing. Publish your own works. Go to your local copy shop, you can do a simple eight pager, 8 1/2 x 11, for a couple of pennies a sheet. You can hand it out, sell it, and be your own publisher. That's how you control your art. I went into art because you didn't have to spell or do math or any of the things I found difficult in school. All I liked in school was drawing and physical education and films, that was it. And summer vacation. Okay, I really better get back to this...

S: Okay, thanks. I'm a cartoonist myself, and your work has been really influential to me...

MOSCOSO: Yeah, thanks, okay...

A gallery patron asks Moscoso if he's Rick Griffin. "I wish," Moscoso replies. He resumes his attempts to sell his signature to fans. "After all," he asks one intensely, "Who know when we'll all be together again? Life is so transitory..."

about clowns who were addicted to drugs?' It's about the same thing." –Dan Clowes



IT'S ON FIRE!

THIS CD CONTAINS MORE THAN 60 MINUTES OF MUSIC – 18 TRACKS FROM THE VELVEL/FIRE CATALOG AND UPCOMING RELEASES. COMPILATION AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY AT ALL TOWER RECORDS LOCATIONS AND IT'S ONLY $3.49 WHILE SUPPLIES LAST!

velvel ©1997 Velvel Records • 740 Broadway • New York, N.Y. 10003

Velvel Records is now making the legendary UK label FIRE RECORDS available for the first time domestically beginning with these releases:

Coming in 1998:
NEW ARTISTS · NEW RECORDS!
NOVOCAINE NP9, LIBIDO, THOMPSON, SALAMANDA, CHUCK UK

Hear them NOW on the IT'S ON FIRE CD sampler

TELEVISION PERSONALITIES "They Could Have Been Bigger Than The Beatles"

TELSTAR PONIES "Voices From The New Music"

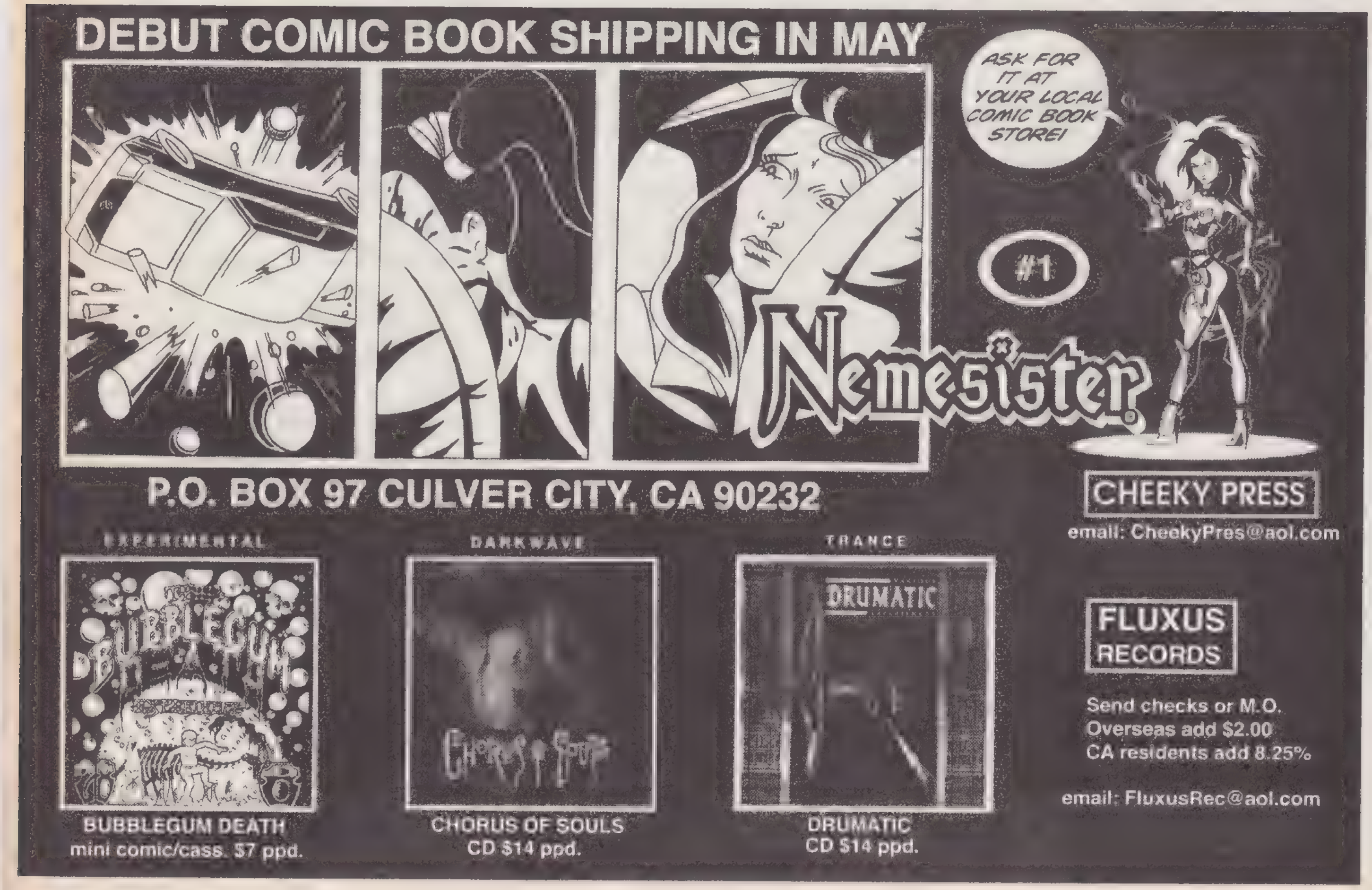
PULP "It"

PULP "Masters Of The Universe"

THE PASTELS "Up For A Bit With..."

PULP "Freaks"

CHUCK PROPHET "Brother Aldo"



DEBUT COMIC BOOK SHIPPING IN MAY

P.O. BOX 97 CULVER CITY, CA 90232

CHEEKY PRESS
email: CheekyPres@aol.com

EXPERIMENTAL
BUBBLEGUM DEATH
mini comic/cass. $7 ppd.

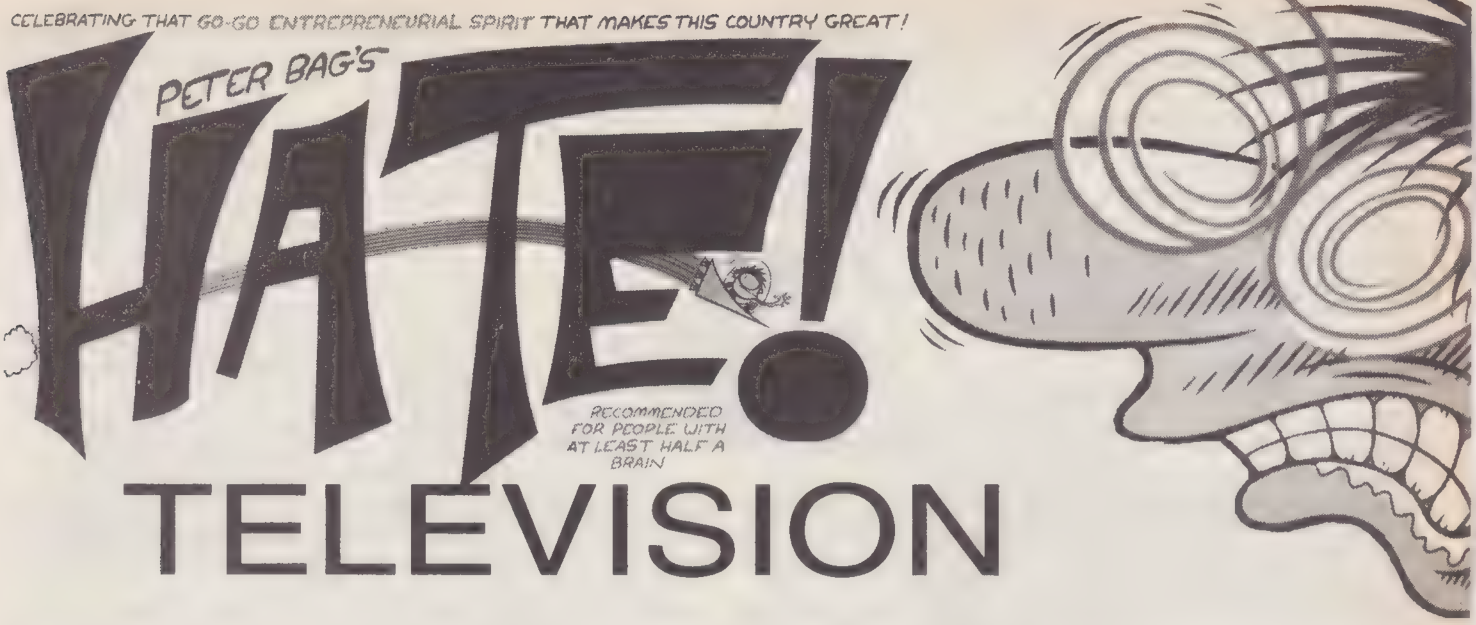
DARKWAVE
CHORUS OF SOULS
CD $14 ppd.

TRANCE
DRUMATIC
CD $14 ppd.

FLUXUS RECORDS

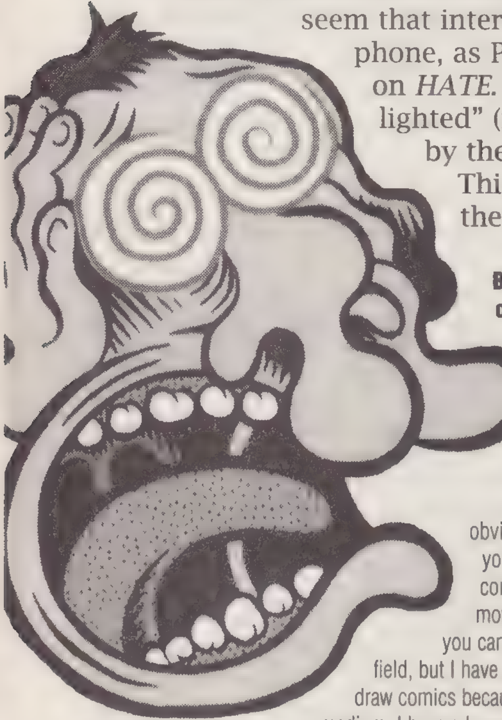
Send checks or M.O.
Overseas add $2.00
CA residents add 8.25%

email: FluxusRec@aol.com


CELEBRATING THAT GO-GO ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT THAT MAKES THIS COUNTRY GREAT!
PETER BAG'S
HATE!
RECOMMENDED FOR PEOPLE WITH AT LEAST HALF A BRAIN

TELEVISION

A couple of years back, when this Comics Issue was originally planned, I did a two-hour plus interview with *Hate* comic book writer and artist, Peter Bagge, in the basement drawing space in his Seattle home. We rambled on aimlessly, mostly about some of our shared political interests and beliefs (Libertarianism) and any influence they may have had on his career as a cartoonist. Upon reviewing the tapes, the upshot turned out to be that they don't really have anything to do with his work as a cartoonist, and hours of two pals spurring each other on to get cranky about politics just wouldn't seem that interesting to anyone else. So I conducted another interview, this one by phone, as Pete was working on scripts for a proposed MTV cartoon series based on *HATE.* He did not, at that point, know whether the series would be "green lighted" (industry lingo for, "allowed to proceed into full production and airing") by the higher-ups at MTV, which added an air of tension to the whole topic. This conversation focused on what had been Pete's main concern through the summer of 1997: getting *HATE* on television. **by Brian Doherty**



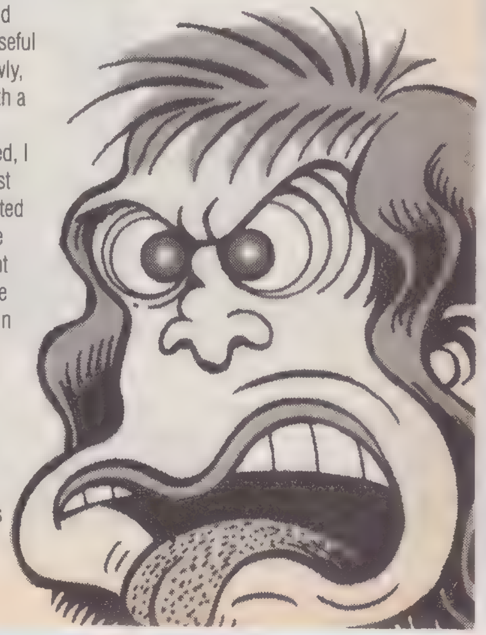
BRIAN: Why are you, as a comic artist, eager to have your stories adapted into other media?

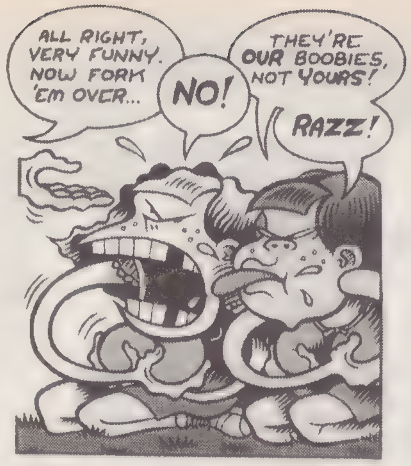
PETE: There are two overriding reasons, and I can't actually say which is more compelling. The obvious one is money. The money you can make having your work converted or adapted for TV or movies is so much greater than you can make working in the comics field, but I have another reason to pursue it: I draw comics because I like them, I'm a fan of the medium, I have a long-abiding interest in sequential illustration, but I also watch TV and movies. I enjoy good TV shows and movies for the same reasons I enjoy good comics. But breaking into TV or movies, or at least managing to be more than a cog in the machine – to actually be a creator, the stakes are so much higher. When I started my career, I couldn't imagine pursuing TV or movies as a way to make a living or make a name for myself – it always seemed too daunting. Especially considering that when I was in my early twenties, my number one inspiration was Robert Crumb. Comics were simpler. With comics, you can literally do everything all by yourself. You can write, draw, and even print the thing all by yourself. Comics were the only way to hold on to total control, to stay true to yourself and still get something out there with your name on the top.

How did you first start pursuing and adapting your work to TV/movies?

It wasn't me who made the first foray. Hollywood came a-calling for *me* after a couple of years of doing *Hate. Hate* was already a relative success in the world of comics, and Hollywood caught wind of that somehow. So I started getting phone calls from producers and development people. I was wary at first. I was flattered, but it was difficult to imagine that anything solid would ever come of it. I knew that even though they were interested, it didn't mean everything was set. I didn't jump out of my seat saying, "Oh boy, here we go!!" Despite any one person's interest, I knew it would be a long row to hoe. I talked to people, felt some of them out. Some might have come recommended from people whose judgment I already respected. I would turn for comfort and guidance to Matt Groening, who had been there and done that. To this day I still get useful advice from him. So I took it slowly, and signed an option for *Hate* with a production company in San Francisco. Once that option lapsed, I got caught up in another. That first option was to make a *Hate* animated feature film. I couldn't tell you the whys and wherefores of what went on with it, because the whole time it was under option I was sitting in Seattle drawing comics. I was leaving this production company to make the most of it and try to sell it.

If it were really vital to me to get this film made, I would have gone along on these pitches that I presume this company was




ALL RIGHT, VERY FUNNY. NOW FORK 'EM OVER...
NO!
THEY'RE OUR BOOBIES, NOT YOURS!
RAZZ!

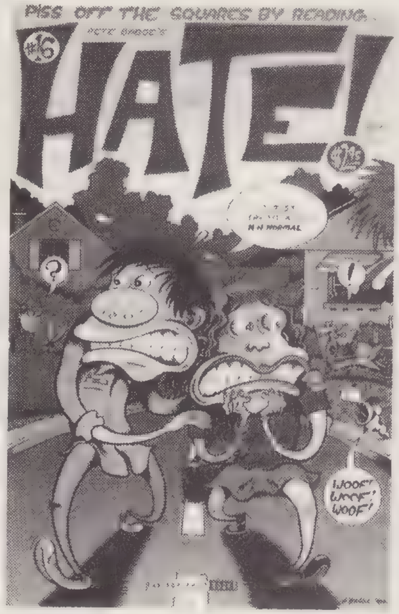
doing, but actually for all I know, they didn't do anything. I have no idea what kind of presentation package they put together, how they pitched it, who they pitched it to. If you're really serious, you've got to stay on top of that sort of thing. The company may or may not have done a good job presenting it – they were a multimedia production company that did all kinds of animation, had production facilities, could do everything from cels to full-length animation. They worked on commercials, films and documentaries, and they also wanted to develop some of their own properties. They did get *Liquid TV* on MTV. Their hope was that something aired on *Liquid TV* would become its own series like *Beavis and Butthead*, and they'd have their hands in it.

My next option was with a small group of friends. We decided we'd try to do this ourselves. But it ended up going against my own interests. The others wanted to make a live action *Hate* movie, which I was less interested in. I was more interested in a regular TV series. I can't see *Hate* as live action *or* as a movie. But every time I would bring up *Hate* as a series, which seems obvious to me, I would be told every time that it would be way too hard to sell, no one would air it, the material was too strong, it would be too watered down.

But I wasn't out there trying to make any of this happen. I live in Seattle. I don't go to Hollywood knocking door-to-door trying to sell *Hate*. I left it up to people who approached me, and of all the people knocking on my door, none of them considered selling it as a TV show. My full-time job was drawing comics, and I wasn't gonna go to Hollywood and lose my house trying to sell a TV show. The existence and success of *The Simpsons* and *Beavis and Butthead* told me that everyone was wrong about *Hate* being an impossible TV show, but I didn't want to risk everything and possibly prove myself wrong.

So what was this second option all about, with the group of friends?

My friends wanted to be indie filmmakers. They wanted to go the Sundance route. But we had no connections with anyone in show-biz, in the world of Hollywood and filmmaking. Some guy from the company that bought my first option offered his services as a connection, so the four of us gave it a try. It was me and three acquaintances, and I was supposed to be the creator. They were supposed to handle packaging and selling it.



After both my options lapsed, what made me stick with this show-biz nonsense was that all of a sudden a lot of people were approaching me again. I had several suitors to choose from who were very interested, but every single one envisioned *Hate* as a live action movie. I still had big problems with that simply because I couldn't see it. Who do I see starring as Buddy? Who would I cast as this person, that person? It always amazes and amuses me that when many of my fellow cartoonists are asked this, they can always name someone! I swear to God, I couldn't name a single person. I'm sure any old talented actor or actress could pull it off, but to this day I can't name anyone who would be even close to the perfect Buddy Bradley. I mean, *he's a cartoon character!!* I know what he looks like: He looks like the way I draw him! People who look like that play the strung out stoolie who gets his brains blown out halfway through the picture. The idea is always: whoever's big at the moment. I'm embarrassed when I discuss this in interviews because sometimes I'll mention the names of people mentioned to me, and it'll be used as the punch line of some sort of joke. I always regret that. It seems like a joke, some teen heartthrob playing Buddy Bradley, and it looks like I'm making fun of the actor, which I'm not. I have nothing against any actor, anywhere! So I don't want to talk about possible names.

But as all this is happening, a friend of mine, Aaron Lee, who now does a column in *Hate*, totally on his own wherewithal wrote up a treatment for *Hate* the movie. He had written a draft of a *Hate* script, trying to convert it from a serialized story to one long story with a convincing ending.

I worked with him a bit and cleaned it up, and he had a very good angle on converting it. So using that, we shopped it around, and Terry Zwigoff [director of *Crumb*] was interested and led us to two other people who decided that they didn't want to option it, they wanted to shop it and let chips fall where they may. That was risky for them, because if I ended up signing a deal, they depended on my good graces to stay involved in the project beyond a broker's fee.

So I had these two associates of Zwigoff's, Albert Berger and Ron Yerxa, who currently have something in production with MTV Films. They brought the treatment to the guy who heads MTV Films, and he showed it to his bosses at MTV. As he suspected, the bosses looked at it and saw the potential of repeating the enormous success of *Beavis and Butthead* all over again: animated TV series first, blockbuster picture later. Poor Aaron then is on the outs, the other guys didn't want to get into TV, and all of a sudden *Hate* is optioned by MTV to be an animated TV series. That's how I've spent most of my summer and fall, developing *Hate* for MTV.

What's the status of that project now?

Right now it's in limbo, but by the time this is in print, if what I've been told is true, I'll know for a fact that it will either be a TV show or it won't. I'll either be on my way to TV stardom or back to square one.

It was already submitted for a green light to the MTV board, and they didn't green light it. They wanted to see more. We made an eight-minute limited animation thing, called an "animatic," that doesn't have all the in-between poses in the animation, and showed that to focus groups. MTV picked two locations and two handfuls of 15 to 30 people. I wasn't there, but they supposedly represented MTV's demographic, 12 to 24-year-olds, and they divided them by ages and sexes and showed them this clip. It got mixed responses. Some liked it and some definitely did not – they thought Buddy was boring and stupid and obnoxious. What we tried to do, for this animatic format, was different from what I signed a deal to do. This is not a 30-minute piece. They wanted to keep it under five minutes, but we got to do eight minutes. I was happy with the way it turned out; all the people working with me thought it turned out all right.

One of the problems was that we tried too hard to address what in the past had been problems with these short animatics. Since it's only eight minutes and not fully animated, people often had problems in the past figuring out what is this person's relation to this one, who was that again? So using *Hate* #1 as a model, we had Buddy talking to viewers. He treats the viewers as invisible guests, and he talks to them and through flashbacks and things, he brings them up to date on his family and roommates, and it ends with him having this insane fight with Stinky. We tried so hard to make everything clear that kids said, "Why are you beating me over the head with who is who and what's what? Do you think we're stupid?" If we focus-grouped it more, we might have gotten different results. We focus-grouped in New Jersey and Columbus, Ohio. New Jersey was positive, Columbus was negative.

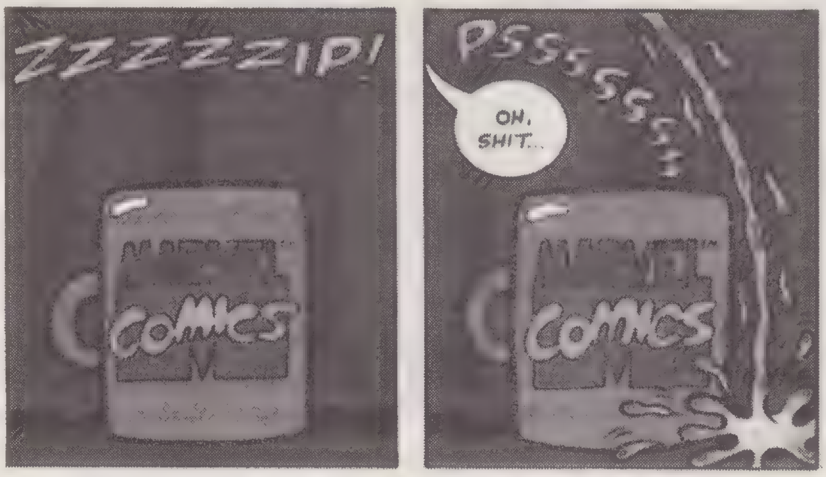
Yvette Kaplan, who was animation director on the *Beavis and Butthead* movie, is really devoted to the *Hate* project. She and Ann Bernstein, who's a story editor at MTV and helped me with the writing for the TV script, went to the focus groups and were put through the wringer. You invest so much in a project and have fucking morons pick it apart. They came back thoroughly demoralized, but the firm that ran the focus groups for MTV actually wrote up a glowing report. They separated the wheat from the chaff in the comments, and made a positive presentation. As you may have heard, MTV ratings are down the toilet. Everyone hates it, and of course MTV is trying to find out why. But based on these kids' responses, the focus-group researchers wrote a report for MTV saying *Hate* was perfect for them and would solve all their problems. But the board still wouldn't green light it, so now Ann and I are writing a full script for the first full-length episode, then we'll have to resubmit that to the board.

Has this been a pleasure for you, leaving comics aside for awhile to work in this new business?

I really enjoyed it. I enjoyed working with the people in the MTV animation department. It's a breath of fresh air for me to get out of my basement studio. Now I vastly prefer this kind of work that involves kibiziting and bouncing ideas off other people. What's become a grind for me is the intensive labor involved in getting ideas down right on paper. I spend days on a page just trying to get it right. The simple act of drawing isn't my cup of tea, since I'm so far ahead of myself in the idea department. To have other people drawing it for me is great. It suits me. Losing that will be another big bummer for me if this TV show doesn't go through.

MTV actually employs an animation studio to do the drawing?

Yes, but the boring part goes to Korea. That's animation's dirty secret. Actually, it's not even that much of a secret anymore. They literally work till they pass out and sleep under drawing tables. They do the boring in-between stuff. We do the vocal track, we do storyboarding and the "extreme poses." Frequently we'll do backgrounds here, or at least a rough of the background. So Americans tend to do the opening pose, then the climactic pose of that scene where someone jumps up in the air with eyeballs bugging out. Then the in-between drawings are hacked out by Koreans – the boring, tedious, labor-intensive part. It's totally fucking boring, and you won't find Americans to do it for the price you can get Koreans to.



This whole thing is actually driving me nuts. I can't view it objectively. MTV gave me enough rope to hang myself with, which I hope I haven't done. They will give me their two cents, give me ideas I liked and ones I don't. But surprisingly, I found myself to be the boss of the meetings. They'd let me call my own tune even though I was a total novice with TV. I mean, what would work for focus groups and boards of directors? What do they want? What are these people looking for? *I* have no idea. The MTV pros would give me some idea, but they can never be sure either. You flat out never know what's gonna fly. It's a total crapshoot. That's why shitty shows get on the air and great shows get killed.

AND SO
♫...IT'S OUR PROBLEM FREE, PHILOSOPHY...
HAKUNA ♫MATATA!♫
ENOUGH! ENOUGH OF THIS STUPID SONG ALREADY!

So you've been in charge of the project so far?

So far. If they have to give this script we're working on now to script doctors, they will. I worry about this being the first step of me losing creative control. But MTV traditionally never aces out the creator. They always use him to keep characters true to themselves. That's another reason I went with MTV. It was Mike Judge's [creator of *Beavis and Butthead*] advice. He told me what it was like dealing with Fox vs. MTV. If I cared about taking the money and running, I would have taken it to Fox. But I'll have better luck getting something true to my vision on the air with MTV.

This whole thing is so nerve-wracking. If MTV green lights it, I'm in for all sorts of new hell. But during the last three or four months, I've let the comic book go to the wayside. I had never blown a deadline with *Hate* before, but now I'm totally blowing it, with all the time and energy and emotional energy I'm putting into this TV show. I didn't want it to be this way. I wanted to keep the comic book going no matter what, but it became undeniable right away that TV is a golden opportunity. If I blew it I would kick myself. I don't want it to be all for naught and find myself just looking at a comic book that's three months late.

This is the first potential media project I've ever actively and eagerly pursued. One reason is because, unlike live action feature films, the thought of *Hate* as an animated TV series does excite me. Another reason is that I have a very bleak view of the future of comics and the print medium in general. I've reached a point where I can't assume that I could always make a living doing comics – it now seems a foolish assumption, so I'm trying to bail out of comics. Although I may change my mind, the perfect scenario for me would be if the TV show got off the ground and became my main source of income, and I kept my foot on the ground by continuing to do comics. With comics I could continue to do exactly what I wanna do and not worry about whether it would sell or not.

I'm afraid it's not just comics that might be on the way out. I think all print media will suffer. Except for every now and then, with things like *Dilbert* collections, *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*, there will always be some phenomenon that will sell in the billions, but it won't be a lively and vital way to make a living. Comics in particular will suffer, considering what people turn to comics for. They won't be able to compete with electronic media for much longer.

When I grew up there was no cable TV. *Beavis and Butthead* would have been unheard of 20 years ago on TV. But now the equivalent of underground comics *can* be aired on TV. Before, if you wanted to read material like that, you had no choice but to buy comic books. Now you can get it by flicking on a TV. It's more accessible, there's no direct exchange of money. Sure, you get a bill at the end of the month, but that's nothing compared with what you have to do to buy an underground comic book. I can't buy my *own* comic book in my neighborhood! Nowhere within walking distance can I buy *Hate*. I'm living in Seattle's city limits, but I still have to get in my car and drive to the downtown hipster neighborhood, spend a lot of time, money on gas and parking, and *hope* that whatever it is I'm looking for will actually *be* there. It's a joke. When it comes to looking for and getting entertainment, this comic book thing is an absurd way to go about your business. You know what you want, but it's an enormous pain and a gamble that you can even *get* it. It's ludicrous compared to clicking on a TV or a computer.

Of course, there's something to be said for holding something tangible in your hands. What comics also now have all over electronic media is that it's totally possible to get one person's vision in comics. For TV, you have to collaborate with dozens if not hundreds of people. You can't play all the roles. Even if you're some sort of hauteur, you still need someone to hold the microphones. You must work with other people, and the up front money to get a movie made or a TV show on the air is *millions*. If you or I were giving someone millions, we'd want to put our two cents in. We'd tell them if we didn't like it. We'd want a return on our investment. Everyone's talking about "The Man breathing down my back," but if The Man put a lot of money into your project, of course The Man will be breathing down your back.

Has it been frustrating for you, moving from comic books where you can do it all yourself and don't have to worry about focus groups and boards of directors?

One of the frustrating crapshoots of focus groups is that you never know who the dominant group will be. A guy who worked as a producer on the *Hate* animatic was at one of the focus groups. Some guy there just said, "I liked it, I really liked it." And a bunch of the other people there tore him a new asshole. The guy probably ends up thinking, "I didn't come here to get screamed at, I'm not gonna go head to head with these people." If the people who like you are young and insecure, they can actually be intimidated out of it. "I guess I didn't like it." But if the stronger-willed people in the group like it, then it can go the other way. Other animatics were tested more than twice. Without making any changes, just showing them to other random handfuls of people, they fared better. I could have whined to have it tested more. But for all I know, the next two groups would have hated it even more. It really is a throw of the dice. Then it went before the Board, who complained that since they wanted it marketed it as comedy, they didn't find enough belly laughs. I don't know what some Board of Directors thinks is funny.

WHAM! BAM! SLAM!
OOH! OOH! OOH!!
UGH! UGH! UGH!

the ultimate "pork" scene

How much work have you had to do for MTV so far? You didn't have to write a whole season's worth of episodes?

What they asked me to do for the purpose of focus groups was two-paragraph descriptions of future episodes. So I did some of those and then 20 more one-sentence descriptions of further episodes. I didn't realize it before doing this animatic, but I got a call from Mary Fleener, who's working with Nickelodeon, and they don't do animatics but make full five-minute cartoons to show to focus groups. And if they don't go to a full series, they stick the short on their show *Kablam*, so at least it gets on the air in front of a real audience, who might actually get excited about it. A bunch of underground comic creators have gone through that. MTV has also had several underground cartoonists through their doors and had it come to naught in the end. *Daria* is MTV's new cartoon, and no single creator came with that. That'll keep going. The only other creator-driven animated series they've aired since *Beavis and Butthead* is one called *The Head*.

I thoroughly intend, if *Hate* gets green lit, to help other cartoonists who could fill up half an hour. I've even kicked around saving up the last two minutes of *Hate* for a cartoon by some other underground cartoonist, but the logistics of that might not work.

I keep hearing you intend to stop focusing the *Hate* comic book on Buddy, which seems strange given that you are endeavoring to make him a big TV star. If the show takes off, would you change your mind about phasing Buddy out of the comic book?

I can't afford to give Buddy a rest completely. It's not like I'm sick of him. I can't get tired of finding things for him to do, since he's become such a great conduit of stories for me, but I don't want to be economically tied to the guy. In comics I don't want to be married to one comic or character because I could see myself getting stale. It all depends on what seems like the way to go. There might be a conflict between the show and the comic book: What if Buddy's doing and acting one thing on TV, but not in the comic? I can see being besieged with letters complaining, "who's this old fart you're writing about, that's not the Buddy Bradley from MTV!"

How hard will it hit you if the MTV show doesn't happen?

I'm trying to be objective and realistic. No one owes me a goddamn thing. When I was born, God didn't look down and say, "This guy's gonna get his own TV show and it's gonna be exactly how he wants it." I have to understand that these people have the objective to put things on TV they'll make money off of. They have stockholders to worry about who don't know what's on TV. They could put on something Peter Bagge and Brian Doherty likes, but if it's not bringing in ratings, it doesn't mean a goddamn thing. All I know how to do is make things I think are good. One thing that's different about me from some other artists I know is that other people know how to be a hack. I honestly and truly have no idea. If I try to write or draw to appeal to what other people want, whenever I've tried that in the past, I've completely failed. I'm no good at doing work for hire, I can't fake it. It's been easy for me to be an independent creator dancing to my own tune, because I literally had no choice. I just had to draw things for myself. The only guarantee I had was that *I'd* like it. If I go against my own instincts to please other people, I just get things that no one likes. This is proving to be a dilemma all over again with the TV show. I want to make them happy. I don't want them to think they've made a mistake. But if I dig in my heels and say, "That's what I really think is funny," and they shake their heads, what do I do? If I do compromise and come up dry, that makes me grit my teeth.

Are you being well paid enough to compensate for all this aggravation?

All the up front money I got will just compensate for my lost income being away from comics and other work. I won't tell you the amount, because it's really embarrassing. But it's the bird in the hand. It was better than any other real offers, which were nothing. If they do nothing, eventually the rights revert back to me. They currently own the rights to do a cartoon of *Hate*. They wanted to buy the whole kit and caboodle, but I held on to publishing rights. Fortunately for me, my lawyer is brutal and relentless. She's Groening's lawyer too; she represents a lot of cartoonists. Mike Judge's initial contract was worse than what I came up with, but he was later able to renegotiate from a position of strength because *Beavis and Butthead* was so well-received. But like with me, who else but MTV would make a TV show out of it?

You say *Hate* will be your first cartoon, but I swear I've seen your characters on TV before.

Some show called *Eek the Cat* ripped off the look of Girly Girl and young Butch Bradley. I considered suing, but I'd be at the mercy of a judge and jury. No matter how convinced I was that I was right, it's like focus groups: If they didn't see it my way, I would be out thousands and thousands of dollars in legal fees. Girly Girl herself has been optioned three different times, most recently by the people who do *Rugrats*. Once Girly Girl was optioned in conjunction with Lorne Michaels' company. They invested lots of time, wrote a series bible, which is outlines for scripts and writers. I was involved in that from home. They'd fax me model sheets and scripts and rewrites, and nine out of ten times when I'd say change this, they would. CBS was interested and a woman there has this m.o., since CBS can afford it, to give out development money to let animation companies pad their income. It pays me, pays writers to write scripts, and it keeps it from being a financial risk for the animation studios.

Once they take that money from CBS, they can't shop it elsewhere. CBS will do this with 40 different projects a year, but will only green light three or four. Everything is thrown into the funnel, but only a few come out at the bottom. All the networks operate on the same deadline, and they don't say whether the show is green lighted till the last minute, too late for you to shop it anywhere else. They don't only want good new shows, they want to prevent good new shows from ending up elsewhere. So they buy lots of properties and sit on them. There's lots of people in the business of *not* making movies and *not* making TV shows.

I know an awful lot of writers and comedians who spend whole careers in development hell, making healthy incomes writing for shows, producing shows, acting in shows that never get made, and walking home with fat paychecks. My friend, the comedian Dana Gould, has come close a number of times to becoming star of a sitcom; he had a fully developed pilot, someone invested millions of dollars, and it got axed.

It beats working at 7-11 I guess, but to make things no one sees would drive me completely insane. To call myself an artist, but no one can ever see what I'm making, even if I've been well compensated for it, is not the way I want to live.

POSTSCRIPT, Early 1998: The story so far has an unhappy ending. Despite all the troubles Pete went through, MTV has definitely nixed the idea of doing a HATE *TV series. They are now attempting to possibly sell the TV rights to someone else, and then Pete could go through all this nonsense again with some other network. But as of now, a* HATE *TV series is still a dream.*

note: by the time you read this, the comic run of Hate will probably have come to a conclusion. It will finish with #30.

COMICS English

by Mick Bladder

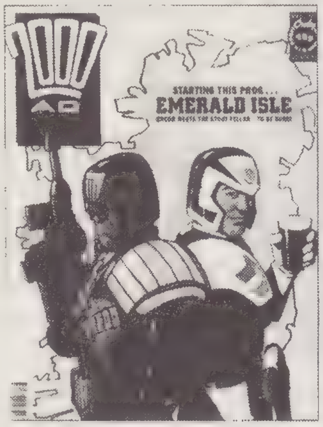
Grant Morrison mixes Pop Music and Superheroes on 2000AD's *Zenith* – the adventures of a Super-Human whose interests include: birds, booze, and being top of the pops.

When studying the wonderful world of comic books, only the dimmest fan-boy trainspotter could fail to spot the remarkable parallel that can be drawn between that medium and that of the rock 'n roll industry.

In both cases, America's contribution seems to be production of the blandest, overblown commercial-safe dross, designed to appeal to the lowest common denominator (come to think of it, that's pretty much the case in all aspects of the U.S. media, TV, movies, etc.

In all cases, it's left to the United People's Republic of Great Britain (and I do mean Great, folks) to inject a bit of originality, controversy and yes, pure talent into the mix and save the day just when America's about to bore everybody to death.

A telling aspect of the English mentality is a deep down dislike and distrust of Flash Gits, whether it be a Superhero or a Superstar. The posturing of stupid Yankee characters in spandex costumes have traditionally never gained a financial foothold in the British market, be it either the *X-men* or KISS. English comics have always been more firmly down-to-Earth; the subject matter comprised mainly of noble topics like soccer, winning the Second World War, or crime stories. The '60s saw an upswing in spy-type subject matter, the peak being reached with the *Superb Modesty Blasé* Series. However, by the mid-'70s the British comic scene was as tepid and ripe for revolution as was the music scene. Just as the Sex Pistols would light a torch under the creaking Reichstag that was the record industry, so a lone British comic title would spark such an explosion of creativity, that its effects are still providing the talent behind all of America's most critically acclaimed comic successes.



Judge Dredd on a pub-crawl 'round Ireland

The first hint of the shape of things to come came in 1975, from a duo of social misfits named John Wagner and Pat Mills, who had worked together as art directors/writers on a fairly predictable title called *Battle* for the I.P.C. Publishing Group in the early '70s. Bored by the restrictions of re-telling how the brave British lads thrashed the Huns senseless, Mills and Wagner plotted to create a new comic which would reflect the popularity of the new trend in cinema: depiction of graphic violence. I.P.C., acknowledging their success on *Battle*, gave the partners in crime a free hand, and *Action* was unleashed on the unsuspecting nation.

The British comic has always been markedly different from its American counterparts in composition as well as content. English comics are comprised of a magazine type-style, running four or five different serials in each issue, and are published on a weekly basis unlike American monthlies. Mills and Wagner wasted not a single page of their proud creation, bringing a whole new attitude to the comic book genre. To start with, most of *Action's* strips were blatant rip-offs of movies popular at that time, but in the hands of Wagner and Mills were given ultra-violent twists that would have had most directors hiding under the bed. The blockbuster hit of the year was *Jaws*, and so *Action* had its murderous Great White, made even more dangerous due to the harpoon which gets driven through its lower jaw in the first episode, becoming embedded and coming in handy as an added weapon for the dismembering of its many, many victims. The film *Rollerball* provided the inspiration for the strip *Spin-Ball*, a sport so vicious that it made the film version look like a pillow fight – *Action's* versions being so lethal that it is only played by a prison league of criminals on death row as an alternative to execution – the alternative being that with spin-ball you could take a few people out with you.

Action's star series was *Dredger*, the grim, cynical exploits of British agent Dredger, who if he was to meet James Bond, would probably end up mugging him. No gentleman spy this, Dredger preferred to shoot his enemies in the back, and if he had time he'd loot the corpse. His missions for British intelligence became increasingly suspect until it was obvious that the government he was working for was as contemptible as any of the targets he was eliminating. This weekly diet of murder, mayhem, dark humor and treason from a comic aimed at the traditionally early-teen market didn't take long to create a reaction – word soon got around, and older readers who normally wouldn't be caught dead reading a comic, latched onto this new, hip publication which reflected the uneasy social attitude of England in the mid-'70s.

Sales rose to unheard of levels, and I.P.C. was rubbing their hands gleefully at these unexpected high dividends when the inevitable backlash occurred – parents began to realize what kind of reading material their little cherubs were being exposed to, and the cry went up – "Save our children from this travesty of a comic book!" The pressure was on I.P.C., to whom comics were just a small part of their publishing empire; many of their publications being family-type magazines which couldn't afford to be associated with such an unwholesome comic book. Mills and Wagner were dragged into head office and ordered to tone down the blood, guts and caved-in skulls and return to more sedate comic book subjects. They refused and left *Action*, which was immediately tamed down, so soon lost its credibility (along with its blood-thirsty readership) and sunk without a trace. However, Mills and Wagner still had a proven track record of success, and sold I.P.C. on a new concept altogether – a brand new title devoted entirely to science fiction stories which would nicely cash in on the latest trend in cinema that *Star Wars* was just breaking. "Hmmm," thinks the I.P.C. chiefs, "Science fiction – nice clean-cut subject, all rocket ships and Martians, what harm could they do?" So in February 1977, *2000AD* was launched to carry on *Action's* legacy of corruption.

The *Star Wars* fairy tale may have been the latest craze sweeping the Americas, but early 1977 saw a different force sweeping England's mean streets: Punk Rock had exploded from the underground, and was front page news as a serious threat to the moral fabric of society – even provoking response at government levels – and the colorful, anarchistic attitude of punk appealed instantly to the like-minded Mills and Wagner. Elements of Punk's creation had been shaped in London's art schools, and soon writers and artists attuned to the Punk manifesto were being welcomed aboard *2000AD* – most noticeably ex-skinheads Brett Ewins and Brendan McCarthey – who attracted attention with their comic strip *The Electric Hoax* (written by their friend Peter Milligan), when it appeared in the music newspaper *Sounds*. From its very start, *2000AD* embraced Punk's nihilistic cynical sensibility – that long hot summer the Punk battle cry was to ring out, "No Future!" and the stories conjured up on a weekly basis by the *2000AD* team supported this outlook to the letter – no shiny, optimistic brave new worlds here Pal, and no strip was to enforce this spirit more than the one that appeared in issue two. Thus was born Britain's most popular comic book character ever – Judge Dredd.

The name "Judge Dredd" was the brain child of Pat Mills, whose interest in the occult was pushing him

Grant Morrison's working-class hero, Big Dave (Manchester's hardest man) responds to an invitation to join DC's Vertigo Line-up.

NOBODY CALLS ME A POOF!

towards creating a supernatural avenging demon story which he put on hold, but the name struck John Wagner, who stole it for a story he was working on involving a future lawman/Dirty Harry type who was empowered to execute criminals on the spot because the legal system had collapsed and anarchy was the order of the day. Working with Spanish artist Carlos Ezquerra, Wagner soon sculpted the story which was to prove so popular. By the 22nd century, the world is in recovery from W.W.I.V. (started incidentally, by U.S. president "bad" Bob Booth – a Nixon look-alike who pressed the button rather than lose an election). America's population is crowded into three Mega Cities. In the Mega Cities, unemployment runs at 98% and only the judge's brand of heavy-duty discipline keeps the lid on a society for whom crime, rioting, or watching TV are the only options. This bleak vision was a mirror image of how many teenagers viewed the England they were living in (which had been the cause of Punk's popularity), and even Ezquerra's visualization of Dredd was inspired by punk – all black leather, zippers and chains. The early Dredd stories had the good judge cast as a noble up-holder of law and order, but successions of up-coming new writers and artists soon had Dredd running on a much darker track, taking the side of the population and casting the other judges as complete fascist bastards keeping the masses in line with all manner of totalitarian tricks. It was no coincidence that the election of hard-liner Prime Minister Maggie Thatcher in England was closely followed by Mega City One's first female Chief Judge coming to power. Despite the bleakness of the subject matter, the popularity of the Dredd strip lay in the dark humor, satirical in-jokes and details that lay in every story. Dredd's many artists were encouraged to make individual interpretations of life in the Mega City – ranging from the tight, precise stylings of Brian Bolland to the outlandish characterization of Ian Gibson or Cam Kennedy. (The main reason why a Judge Dredd movie could never capture the spirit of the *2000AD* original, was due to the high standards set in writing and art which would be impossible to re-create on celluloid, especially when you have to dilute the subject down so Sylvester Stallone doesn't come across as too right-wing, and the only humor left is provided by some short-arse refugee from *Saturday Night Live*. Still, old Danny Cannon did his best as director – being a *2000AD* reader of long standing, at least he knew what he was doing and had enough sense to hire the brilliant Kevin Walker away from his ABC warrior strip to act as the film's art designer.)

"KEEP IT ZIPPED FOR CHRIST'S SAKE"
"TRUE HEROES DO IT ON THEIR OWN"
JUST SAY "NO!"

Pat Mills and Kev O'Neills' Moral Majority Superheroes have a message for America's youth in the sweetly subversive *Marshal Law*.

Anyway, it didn't take long for *2000AD* to attract all the brightest, freshest talents to its ranks – including hairy wild man Alan Moore, who was to provide the comic with many landmark stories such as *Skizz*, *The Ballad of Halo Jones*, *Dr. and Quince* and a whole load of short stories in his *Future Shock* series before he had a falling out with the *2000AD* bosses over retaining ownership of his creations. Eventually he sold out to the running dogs of Yankee capitalism – namely DC Comics, who had been keeping an eye on events and knew a good thing when they saw it and were waiting to poach whatever talent they could get their hands on. Starting off by revitalizing DC's *Swamp Thing*, Moore was to create one of the most acclaimed series ever with fellow *2000AD* refugee artist Dave Gibbons: the ground breaking *Watchman* However, soon after this, the volatile Shaggy was to fight with DC just as he had done with I.P.C. and stormed off. Today he's reduced to writing fucking *Spawn*, for Christ's sake.

Back in England, even better new writers had jumped in, and with faces like Pete Milligan, Grant Morisson, Mark Miller and Garth Ennis turning on the charm, nobody was missing Moore too much. Although all four of these writers were to find work with DC (in fact its *Vertigo* line is almost like a *2000AD* reunion club), none of these boys made the mistake of turning their backs on *2000AD*. They still produce work of such high quality and subversiveness that no U.S. major company would touch it, although Mr. Ennis and art heroes Steve Dillon and Glen Fabey are doing their damnedest to stir up trouble with their *Preacher* creation. Even poor old Marvel tried to get in the act by letting Grant Morrison and his favorite artist, Steve Yeowell, loose with *Skrull Kill Krew* which lasted a whole five issues before the plug was pulled. Treats that non-*2000AD* readers have missed out on include Milligan's hilarious *Adventures of Bix Barton – Master of the Rum and Uncanny*, Mark Miller's wonderful *Red Razor*, Garth Ennis and his bizarre *Time Flies* or any of his scripts for *Judge Dredd* and *Strontium Dogs* and the unsurpassable brilliance of Grant Morrison which gave the United Kingdom such delights as *Really and Truely*, the politically suspect *Big Dave* (Manchester's hardest man), and the definitive Superhero, *Zenith* – who being a teenager with super powers does what any normal English lad would do: uses it as a gimmick to base a career in Pop Music – only reluctantly taking leave from his life of Supermodels, night clubbing and flying home drunk off vodka to take on Supervillains (his manager convinces him of the good publicity such stunts provide).

However, of all the brilliant writers *2000AD* has been host to, one man's output makes him stand out, and as he is the comic's co-creator too, then that must make him the greatest man ever to draw breath: this Demi-God of comics being Mr. Pat Mills. The extent of his literary triumphs and creations is too vast to list here, but a common theme runs through the majority of his work – the eternal struggle between dark and light, order and chaos, civilization and anarchy, and trust me sweet reader, old Pagan Mills ain't on the side of the angels or even mankind half the time. In *2000AD*'s first issues, he wrote *Flesh* – a nifty little plot about mankind's desire for red, red meat in a future where he'd made most cattle extinct (it's started already – mad cow disease is going to get you too!). Leading corporations develop time travel back to the Burger King equivalent of the day, until the predator dinosaurs become fed up with losing their prey to man, led by a giant T-Rex known as Old One Eye, gang up and storm the Trans-Time Base, and in scenes reminiscent of *Action*, proceed to devour as many cowboys as messily as possible.

Mills' next major attack on humanity came with his long-running *Nemesis The Warlock* sagas in which Earth in the distant future is controlled by Torquemada, a fanatical leader of a puritanical religious movement which keeps the masses in line by promoting fear of the many Alien races abounding. His cry of, "Be pure, be vigilant, behave!" sets his legions on a Holy, xenophobic crusade to cleanse the Universe of all things non-human – Nemesis being the Satanic-looking leader of the resistance. With the demonic art style of Kevin O'Neil providing suitable visuals, this series is still one of the most popular in *2000AD*'s history. Taking his battle to the other end of time, Pat Mills also created *Slaine* – the ancient adventures of a Barbarian so barbaric that he'd make Conan look like a flower arranger (Slaine's favorite saying being, "kiss my axe"). Mills' research into Celtic lore provided many an interesting detail showing how the old Earth religion of Goddess worship was overthrown by the new craze, Christianity. Incidentally, Slaine is a real character who became the first high king of Ireland. Slaine's adventures are still unfolding, and over the years have been illustrated by artists like Glen Fabry and Simon Bisley, who Pat Mills discovered and took under his wing until he started hanging around disreputable characters like King of the Goblins, Glen Danzig. One of Master Mills' more recent series is *Finn* – taxi driver by day, by night: eco-terrorist and occult vigilante waging war on a modern society which is anti-nature and therefore against the Goddess worshipping coven to which he belongs.

One of Pat Mills' greatest crusades occurred outside the pages of *2000AD*, when he took his battle to America in order to strike at the heart of the subject – Superheroes and why America loves 'em. *Marshal Law* is a thought provoking series based in a near future where genetic engineering has created a breed of Superhumans which are used by America to crush left-wing rebellions in South America. Once the war is over, the streets are littered with "surps" or Surplus Heroes – battle shocked vets who roam as street gangs taking their revenge on normal society which used and dumped them – the idea being that when you can't feel pain, you want to inflict. Keeping the Surps in line is Marshal Law – also an ex-vet with enhanced powers employed by the city as a hero-hunter. Marshal Law, however, reserves his true hatred for an elite group of Superhumans like Public Spirit – clean cut, square-jawed all-American Heroes who were instrumental in providing propaganda for a dirty un-just war with recruiting slogans like, "Confidence Comes With A Cape". The fact that this group of Heroes worshipped by the masses were obvious thinly-disguised characters from Marvel and DC Comics just added to the fun. Mills is quoted as saying that whenever he was stuck for ideas, he'd read his kid's mainstream comics and return to the typewriter all fired up with fresh venom.

So as *2000AD* celebrates issue one-thousand with plenty of nice new stories like "Button Man," "Cannon Fodder," "Sinister Dexter," and "Venus Blue Genes" keeping the grand tradition and with Judge Dredd appearing in his own adult magazine as well as best-selling novels, newspaper strips, and even in a daily serial radio broadcast by the B.B.C., the future continues to look bright for England's greatest contribution to world Comicdom – the only dark cloud on the horizon behind the burning question on every Brit's lips in the empire – just what will the comic call itself in two years when the new millennium arrives?

If you'd care to discuss it further with Mick, visit him at The Fantastic Store comic book shop in Hollywood.

CHUMBAWAMBA

by rev. tin-ear

The universal intent of most every modern band – be they punk, rock, pop, metal, blues or what have you – is to become as big as the world will allow. But when sudden and overwhelming worldwide success envelopes a band whose efforts commenced some fifteen years ago, and have ever since not only not deviated from their course, but remained strong simply from having started out under the realization that their own personal values were different from most every other band, there is sure to be a tempest screaming for disclosure as to why they took the step to become such a planetary smash. As well there is that anticipation and anxiety that will fill the fetid air of the record industry, a market that may melt this unexpected iceberg or may just as soon be wrecked by it's hidden girth. And it is that very girth, the message that is integral to Chumbawamba's physiology, that needs to be inspected, both for the new listeners, and to inquire of that which may be amiss in the band's camp.

Too many of you who may be longtime fans of Chumbawamba may well ask why a fellow longtime fan decided against attacking the band for their seeming shift in ideals, and although I have since wished to inquire of the first single ("Tubthumbing") being used for two extremely stupid films (*Home Alone 3* and *Senseless*), I am aware that the monies raised will more likely than not go to organizations that will be far more pervasive in helping to rid our planet of such moronic mainstream drek. And as I am aware of how many bands in the past have been equally idealistic yet sold out (and eventually dried up and blew away), I cannot help but take the risk in believing that Chumbawamba shall remain the breath of fresh air among the stale stalwarts that jam the airwaves of mainstream radio.

When I first interviewed Chumbawamba, the year was 1990 and it was the band's first American tour. Ironically, the heated interlocution then was a template for our present-day discussion, the difference being that all three of us were able to talk rather than argue. The most pressing question was that of their sudden success and the almost immediate barrage of accusations that prompted Alice Nutter to pen a missive to *Punk Planet* about their decision to sign with EMI Records affiliate Universal Records. I was curious as to whether or not they were having to deal with a lot of flak regarding having "sold out," and as I had first become aware of the sensation they had become upon hearing the first single being played in a fast food joint (El Pollo Loco), I exploited an inside connection to find out their album sales for the week preceding the impending interview (it numbered 55,000).

Alice: To a certain extent, we are dealing with the accusations. We're meetin' people who're saying, "How could you do this? You've disappointed me so much." The world is a disappointing place, and as far as we're concerned, we took a conscious decision to get where we are. And that was a risky decision; we're working with people that we have nothing in common with at all. We've got completely different agendas. But at the moment, it's actually working out. We are getting into karaoke machines. We're doing two-hour radio interviews where, despite what other people's agendas are, we've got our political agenda. But people have said to us, "You've watered down your music for a major label." We finished this album before we had a deal. We finished it in a completely unsecured situation; it was us against the world. Everybody was sayin', "You're shit; give up." And we finished it in this atmosphere that we're gonna make the best album we can, that it's gonna have a total backbone of politics and it's gonna be a pop album. And if it doesn't ever get released (so it just gets released on our label), it don't matter 'cause we're gonna be proud of it. It's brilliant. Boff and Harry did the production. We had no money at all – we were absolutely skint. But I think that the way we see it now, being on a major label, is that we're in a honeymoon period. And we totally recognize that as long as you're selling records, they will be captivated and continue throwing money at ya. But as soon as what we do doesn't sell, then the relationship ceases. We're under no illusions about it at all. The way we see it is that, during this time, we have to, in some way, make sure that Chumbawamba can carry on later. Maybe we'll be in a position, after all this has sorted out, where we can restart our label.

Pursuant to their idealism that is practical rather than fashionable, Chumbawamba refused to sign away their music publishing rights, a factor that is almost always a prerequisite for a band's major label debut (the practice is somewhat prevalent among independent record labels, too).

Alice: People think that the move to a major was motivated by money, and we've never been motivated by money. If we had, we would have given up years and years ago. We've been at it for fifteen years now, under circumstances and an amount of money that most people could not live on. Ya learn to live on a small amount. We can't believe, actually, that it has exploded. But we're not going, "Oh, wow, a dream come true." We're going, "Opportunity. Take it." But the thing is, we can always do something else, as well. We don't see ourselves as pop stars. We don't fit that; we could never fit that.

One would probably be able to understand why Chumbawamba have become so popular, yet there are former fans so maligned by having spent many years in the world from which the band emerged as well as amongst the peoples whom have only very recently discovered the band's music. Because punk and all of the subgenera thereof are such microcosms, the people in them forget about how the rest of the world is so divested of them, and the rest of the world is itself insular in its dependency upon mainstream radio and television to tell them what is hip. Ultimately, the sub-subcultures become jaded and the rest of the world fails to seek out that which is not hyped by the music industry. Chumbawamba are without a doubt unique in the world of pop, where there is little if any depth or sincerity in all of the acts that are as quick to come as they shall soon enough go.

But it is nonetheless difficult to be aware of the world that bred politically active bands such as Chumbawamba (and Crass, from which one of the members came) without being cynical towards the band's idealism. The very realization that people are daft, and should during their many years take but one moment to start digging their way out of their predicament, breeds both caring and contempt. Given the chance, Chumbawamba may well place the cornerstone that could one day be capable of tumbling the tombstone that humanity has erected for itself. And that begs the question regarding the ability of the public's perception of the band's radical socio-political messages.

Alice: We want to address the communities we've come from. We've come from working class communities that didn't have the liberal, intellectual background, that don't have a punk-rock puritanism, that don't even care about major labels. We want to basically put ideas forward where people don't have access to them. It's fine to be a voice of a dissenting community, that is a good thing to be. But we are more useful in the real world.

Do you know the reason that I so vehemently resist this idea that people are generally stupid? It is that when I first got into punk rock, I didn't understand it. I didn't understand the lyrics at all; it went over me head. I thought, "God, it's for clever people; it's not for me." But I also thought, "I don't understand the lyrics, but the feeling of it..." I was totally drawn to it. It was something about the feeling about it, emotionally, a group of outsiders that drew me towards it. I went on a demo – I'd never been on a demo, before – and people were shoutin', "No more Nagasakis! No more Hiroshimas!" And I didn't know what Nagasaki or Hiroshima was. I had to ask, "What was Nagasaki?" And so, if I can come from that mindset, then why can't other people come from it? You just need opportunity.

Danbert: See, I don't agree with that cynicism at all. I think that ("Tubthumping") has reached all these people, and there will be a percent – which might be a bigger percent of those people – who will just take that song and enjoy it and not go any further into it. You don't know how many people it really touches and how many people will go and look into something else deeper that is sparked by it. In a lot of ways, it's an act of faith, y'know. First we put that music out there, and we get letters back from people in out of the way places. The theme on the album, "Outsider," is one of the themes of which is that, there's a lot of outsiders, y'know, in the world, and the idea is that we're not alone. And that's one of the things that we're trying to get across.

Superman is dead? Good, I hated him. –Howard Stern

Alice: You see, I look at people, and I don't look at them and think about Chumbawamba at all. I When I listen to the music, I don't think, "Will we reach these people?" It never even crosses me mind. What I think is, "The reason the world is so fucked up is that all our value systems are fucked up," and that's what we have to change. People chose what they think is security, which is actually quite a ruthless way of life, because they're not offered any more options. I used to disagree with this idea of "by example," but I totally changed me mind, because I think once you come into contact with better ideas – and some people actually think selfishness and ruthlessness is a good idea, which it's not – and I see homeless people, and I think, "I know you're not there because you're inadequate; you've ended up in the street because you were set up to fuckin' fail." Well, unless you work; work is the biggest myth of the western world. Unless you trade your time, if you spend at least forty hours a week doing something you hate, you are fucked. I have a lot of respect for people who say, "I'm not gonna work." When you talk to people and they go, "People are lazy," and you go, "Yeah, of course they're 'lazy'; what is so wrong with not wanting to do something you hate?" People are using other's success stories. Y'know, you've got radio DJs sayin', "It just goes to prove that if you stay at it long enough, and work hard enough, then anybody can make it." And you're goin', "Fuck off; that is *not* true." People slog away their entire life and die penniless, and ailing and alone. That's how capitalism works. It doesn't care about how good your heart is. But I really don't think people are stupid. I think we're not offered many options. All my ideas come from other people.
Danbert: That's people's potential to learn it, and if they don't get offered the opportunities or they don't seize them or make them, they do fail.
Alice: But, people aren't offered ideas. You're offered right-wing ideas all the time, and anything that stands in opposition to that is met with, "Ban it! Smash it!" It's absolutely bizarre that people think pop and politics don't mix. Right wing politics are there all the time; what heavy metal band are not right wing? Name a heavy metal band that isn't perpetuating the status quo. We think that, just because you might not see a revolution in our lifetime, that shouldn't stop you from trying for it, you know. There are moments that spring up, though, like Paris, 1968. When the French police were kickin' Algerians to death in the street in 1960, you woulda thought that would be the moment when people' rose up, and it wasn't. So you can never tell when revolution is gonna come. In 1905, Lenin – and I'm not a fan of Soviet communism, at all – but Lenin wrote a pamphlet stating, "the revolution will not happen in our lifetime," that "the moment has passed, comrade." And when the Russian Revolution did happen, the Communist Party weren't prepared for it. People *don't* know when revolution's gonna happen; they cannot judge the moment. But with Paris '68, it was a partial revolution, but what impressed me was that revolution is feasible.

Yet another obvious aspect as to Chumbawamba's decided difference in the pop music world, is their attempt to try and make up for the compromises that complicated copyright and other *de facto* censor rules, as well as having to understand that the complicity of other entities is bound to leave them without near the repercussions that their partners would face. And while most any band would without so much as a retort let their lawyers omit "profane" or "obscene" words and verses, Chumbawamba have done all in their power to make available those quotes which the vast and equally ludicrous copyright rules disallowed them to publish within the North American version of the album.

Danbert: We went with Universal, and in Europe the sleeve is complete because European copyright laws are different. In Europe, you're allowed to quote so much without running into any problems, so everybody does it and nobody minds. The Universal lawyers said, "Look, if we're gonna put this out, we have to get permission for these quotes, because that's American copyright law." We've had to do it before; that's why *Jesus H. Christ* never came out, because the distribution company would have got sued and not us. And so, you have to respect that, in some ways.
Alice: I don't respect it.
Danbert: The choice was, we won't have anything in there or we could have waited a year. And financially speaking, for us who need to make a living, we couldn't wait a year. And that was the compromise.
Alice: The quotes omitted from the album are up on the net now, too. But we were pissed off about it. In the past, we've always been able to have a say, but this time, it's not us who would get sued. But we couldn't get copyright information; some of it was Plato. What do ya do, dig 'im up fifty years after you were dead... like George Orwell's estate, you can't get any copyright permission. But we still used it.
Danbert: That's one of the reasons people have said, "The politics have watered you down, because the context is not immediately there when you get the CD." You have to do that extra bit of work. And for us the album feels incomplete.
Alice: In a way, though, ya have to make politics *easy* for people, because they're so used to thinking politics are above them. If it were up to us, we'd use it. We've always had this attitude: "Come and get us! What the fuck are ya gonna take?" But it would be good, 'cause you could see the context of the album, all the ideas behind it, not just Chumbawamba but all the politics in popular culture. There's a quote that sums it up: "Don't let my unseriousness make you think it isn't serious." Which is totally what we're all about.

For any band, however, there are inevitable changes that accompany world renown, but such changes are far more interesting when they occur to a band that is far from predisposed of stardom and all the trappings of it.
Danbert: Fundamentally, it doesn't affect us at all. The only thing, really, is that we're away from home a lot, because the scheduling is really intense. We have to be really careful, because we don't want to self-destruct. And I think we're doin' really well, because we do sit down and have meetings and carry on like we always 'ave.
Alice: We're doing really well at being tired, yet not taking it out on each other, because I was really worried about that; being bad-tempered just because we don't get any sleep. And money as well; everyone's been particularly cool about money. When things blow up and you're offered big amounts of money, people are often dreamy and fail to ask, "What does this mean? What does this say?" And in some ways we're getting offers to do some things that contradict our intellect, which is a pile of shit and we know it's a pile of shit. And it's just instinct to say "No," and then we go, "But it's £40,000. Let's take it and give it to the autonomous socialist center (in Spain) and keep it going for a few years. Or give it to a pro-choice organization." So there's quite a lot of good things happening. We've done whole tours and raised only £300. And now we did one gig and raised £10,000. there's other times when it's all record company bullshit, where it's unbearable to us. And we're very polite people, not because we're wimps, but because we haven't got rock 'n roll arrogance. But in that politeness, sometimes it's just like music industry schmoozing, and we absolutely hate it. For all that, we just say, "Leave me alone." But in a lot of ways, we're doin' all right. It's been our attitude that if you can walk down the street with this attitude that you're a freak of the world, people will look at you; if you just feel like you're a part of the street, no one will say aught to ya. I'm going to take it on the chin. There's an escape clause which is, "If you don't like it, stop it. Do something else." Like Kurdt Cobain syndrome, when he blew his brains out. I just thought, "Oh, he fell for the rock 'n roll myth; why didn't he just give it up?" He had enough money that he could have gone away and been a painter for five years, and in five years' time he would've been an interesting pop icon while the next thing came up. Pop culture is five minutes, so you can leave it, walk right out.

MISS GALAXY - "DUH!" lp/cd (RR-127)
New fucking wave power punk. Like all those Trance bands, but with songs. Formerly MISS UNIVERSE for reasons which should be obvious.

FURRY THINGS-debut 7" (RR-85)
Four-track stuff that sounds like David Gedge and J. Mascis spending waaaay too much time in Dunedin. Brilliant.

MEMPHIS GOONS - "toottoottoot toottoottoot" 7" ep. (RR-84)
Crazed 1970 recordings from the wood-panelled rec rooms of Ebbis-town. The Goons tell me that the goal is to be bigger than Guided By Voices, but they'll never make it because they don't SUCK.

HENRY BISON-"Family values" 7" (RR-75)
This guy worked at my record store. He made the owner nervous and got fired for wearing pajamas to work. For that alone he deserves a record. Imagine Chris Knox whupping the SHIT outta Lou Barlow with a 4-track. Lord knows I do.

PARANOIDS - "Vintage Piss & Vinegar" ep(RR-88)
garage rock ladeeda, "jagged, insistent, raw" sez Raoul.

UPCOMING RELEASES: CAT POWER w/ MATT SHIPP & WILLIAM PARKER...
C.A. GIANTS(John Langford side project)

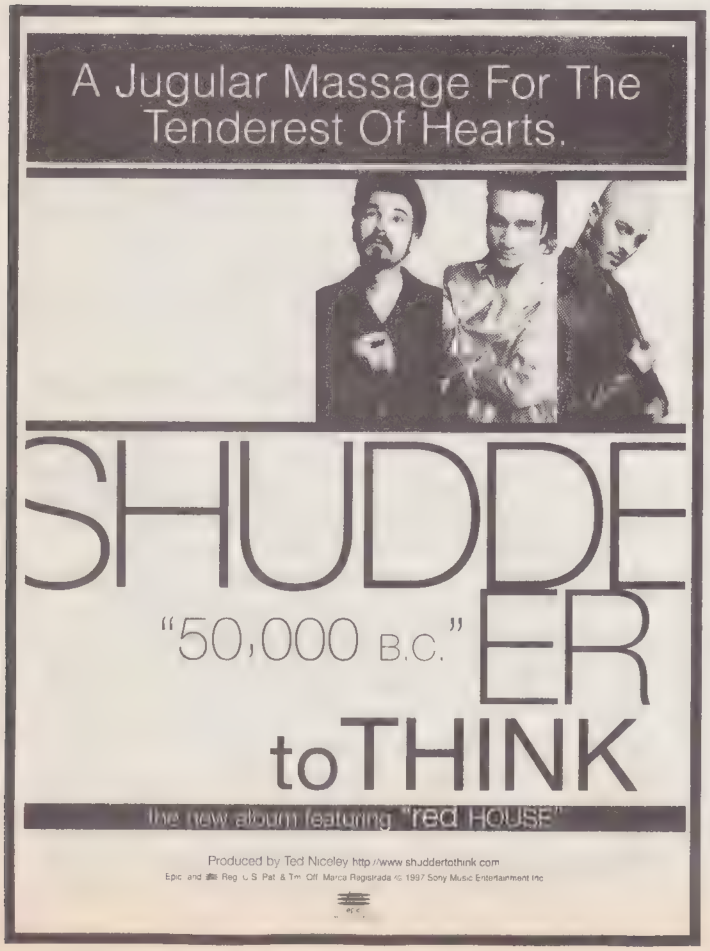
RISE RECORDS 2116 guadalupe #210
Austin Texas 78705 *our motto:* "the less relevant the better."

pink noise test

pink noise test

PLASTICIZED

DEBUT ALBUM OUT NOW ON
www.pinknoisetest.com



A Jugular Massage For The Tenderest Of Hearts.

SHUDDER toTHINK

"50,000 B.C."

the new album featuring "red HOUSE"

Produced by Ted Niceley http://www.shuddertothink.com

Epic and Reg U.S. Pat & Tm Off Marca Registrada © 1997 Sony Music Entertainment Inc

For your head now...

mundy

the debut album
jelly legs
includes
"To You I Bestow"
featured in the hit movie
"Romeo + Juliet"

jelly legs
mundy

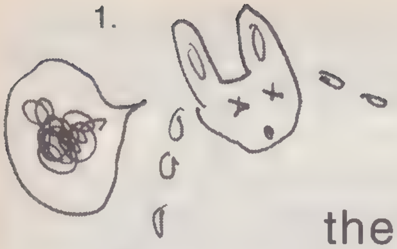
Produced by Youth

AVAILABLE AT.
ARON'S
1150 N. Highland Avenue Los Angeles
FINGERPRINTS
4612-B East 2nd Street Long Beach
RHINO
1720 Westwood Boulevard Los Angeles
235 Yale Avenue Claremont
MAD PLATTER
10117 Hole Avenue Riverside

http://www.sony.com

"Epic" and Reg. U.S. Pat & Tm. Off.
Marca Registrada /© 1997 Sony Music Entertainment (UK) Ltd

1.



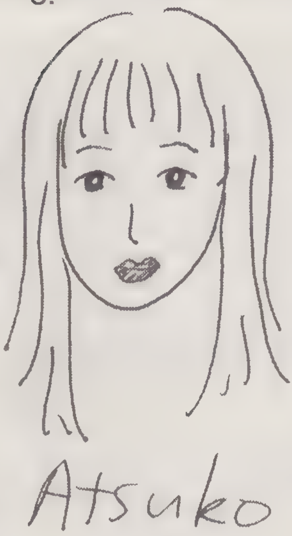
2.

the art of

shonen knife

by Jason Cole and Lorraine

3.



Jason: Shonen Knife has been one of my favorite bands since the mid '80s. Every album they've ever put out has put a smile on my face from beginning to end and that isn't something you can say about many groups. Never pretentious or boring, they are my idea of a perfect band. We trapped them backstage after their soundcheck to realize my dream of meeting these women...

Jason: How long were you together as a band before you played outside of Japan?
Naoko: Totally, over ten years, five years after we had our major debut.
Lorraine: Is there a difference between the audiences from Japan and America?
N: There is no difference. Every Shonen Knife fan already knows our songs and they sing along with us!
J: You have a reputation for being cute girls from Japan and it seems sometimes that image takes precedence over your music and lyrics, does that make you angry? Does that piss you off?
N: I think we are very ugly!
J: No!!!
Michie: Our mothers sometimes come to watch us play and they say that we are very un-sexy.
L: No way!
N: We don't mind if people say something bad or good, we are just playing music.
J: There are a lot of Japanese bands that owe their popularity in America to you guys coming over here and breaking through to fans over here, and I was wondering if you would ever consider doing a tour of the states with Pizzicato Five, Super Junky Monkey, the 5678's or bands like that, like a big Japanese Monsters Of Rock tour?
N: Ah, but we are from Osaka and they are from Tokyo, so Shonen Knife and them are very different.
J: Do you think they are jealous of you?
N: They?
J: The other bands.
N: Um, I think there is no competition with music, that's for athletics and some sports, but for music it depends on personal taste.
J: So this issue of *Ben is Dead* is the Comics Issue, and we thought we might ask you a few questions about manga and anime films. When I was in Osaka last year, I noticed a lot of girls on the trains reading manga (Japanese comic anthologies).
N: Yeah!
J: Do you read manga? Are you fans of comics?
N: I don't read manga so much

4.

and even when I was a child I didn't read manga so much.

J: (To Michie and Atsuko) **Do either of you?**

Atsuko: Ah...I don't read it.

J: No?

M: When I was young I wanted to be a cartoonist.

L: Really?

5.

M: Yes, I wanted to draw manga for girls. There are different kinds, boys' manga and girls' manga, and I'm a big fan of girls' manga.

J: Which ones did you like the best?

M: Something called *Agiyo Moto*.

N: And she even drew manga stories, I think they were great!

M: I used to send those works to publishers but...

J: You should try it now.

N: I read her manga book and I thought the stories and drawings were perfect for me, I liked them very much!

L: So would you rather be cartoon characters or comic book heroes?

N: My favorite cartoons are some American cartoons, like *Josie and the Pussycats*, and also I like to watch the animation from the Beatles. Do you know it? I like that cartoon.

L: There *should* be a Shonen Knife cartoon, that would be great!

J: There are actually some American comic artists that have put you in their comics, like *Love and Rockets* have a character that has a dream that they are at a Shonen Knife show, and one of the main characters' favorite band is Shonen Knife.

N: Really? Wow! We had no idea, we didn't know that. I want to read!

J: I have one with me, I'll give it to you.

N: Oh yeah, OK!

J: Have you seen the animated cartoon series called *All Purpose Cultural Cat Girl Nuku Nuku*?

N: Cat girl Nuku Nuku?

J: It's about a robot that's part cat, and part human and part robot, from Japan.

N: Uhhh...

J: No? I thought you might like that one. On one of your records you have a song called "I am a cat". I thought it was about this Japanese cartoon character. Not true?

N: No, it's the title of a famous Japanese novel. About one hundred seventy eighty or five hundred years old story by very famous Japanese author wrote that story called "I am a cat".

J:.My wife is from Osaka, and she reads manga all the time and she'll get like thirty really big thick manga magazines and I won't hear from her for like two or three days, and one day I wondered what was so interesting so I opened one up and there was tons of sex going on [Shonen Knife crack up over this]. **Girls in America don't read that many sex comics y'know. I was wondering, do you think Japanese women are more relaxed about seeing and talking about sex?**

N: Yeah, I think *we* are getting old, but Japanese high school students, female high school students became more free. Free for talking about sexual things.

J: About your latest album, I notice that a lot of the lyrics are quite serious in nature. It seems like you're exploring new topics in your songs, "A Perfect World" in particular seems to stand out on the album as a very serious and lonely kind of song. What took you so long to express those kinds of feelings on your records, did you think serious songs didn't fit the Shonen Knife image?

N: I think we've learned very much if we compare it with our old stuff. So we started to write about something serious.

J: So you're getting more philosophical as you get older?

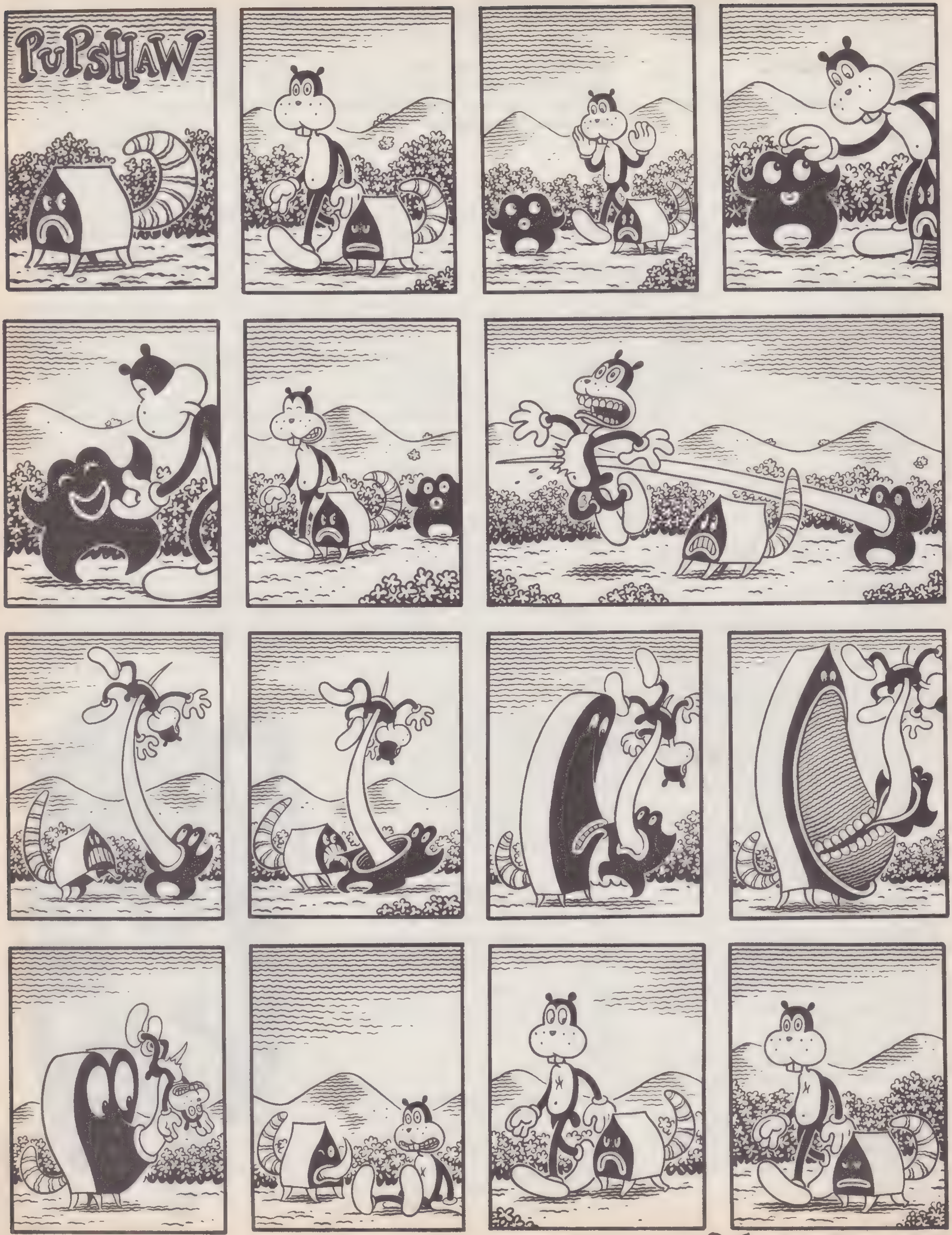
N: Ugh, yes.

L: You wanna draw yourselves as comic book characters? [hands out trusty pens and paper]

N: Yeah!

Lorraine: At this point Shonen Knife were finishing up their self-portraits (fig. 2, fig. 3, fig. 4) except for Michie decided that she'd rather draw me (fig. 5); and I asked them if they'd mind answering some questions Darby sent along for her book on female sexuality and masturbation in which we're interviewing powerful, prominent rockin' chicks. They said that it was fine, so I start firing away the prepared interrogation to which I'm greeted with flustered giggles, even though I'd made Jason leave the room. Now as embarrassed as I was at having to ask these sweet, doe-eyed creatures such smutty questions (considering that I personally prefer chocolate bars to masturbation, and if offered the choice would nine times out of ten rather go shoe shopping than get laid – gee what's worse, a little buyer's remorse or the months of regret that accompanies sleeping with some worthless shmuck? Real tough question, but I digress...), my chagrin was nothing compared to the uncomfortable terror it seemed to strike into their guileless hearts. In fact, at this point Michie hurriedly drew another picture and spoke for all of them when she said, "I feel like this now!" (fig. 1) I had made them all feel like terrified bunnies with no way to express their extreme trapped anxiety other than with frightened, frantic scribbling! I truly felt mean and horrible, like the Abominable Snowman who nearly smothers Bugs Bunny to death (when all I really wanted to do was hug them and squeeze them and love them and call them George because they were so cute), but like the awkward ice monster, I unwittingly performed such ghastly transgression. In attempt to rectify the situation, I quickly changed the subject. They immediately brightened and started telling me how hard it is to find shoes in America, as they all have such tiny feet (fig. 6)

6.



© JIM WOODRING '95

SHOWS

LIVE EVENTS IN THE GREAT~~ER~~est LOS ANGELES AREA REVIEWED BY THE BEN STAFF WRITERS OR WHOEVER THE HELL THESE PEOPLE ARE.

Lisa AA at Oz fest

SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN

EVER NOTICE IF YOU MIX THE LETTERS IN "SANTA" AROUND, YOU CAN SPELL "SATAN"?

By Jane Cacophony

A couple of weeks before Christmas, 200 Santas descended on Los Angeles for the Fourth Annual Santacon. This yearly tradition exploring the seamy side of Santa started in San Francisco in 1994 when 25 "Cheap Suit Santas" converged on the streets of San Francisco, staging a Santa lynching in Union Square, going to the now-ubiquitous strip club, and generally causing mayhem. After a second year in San Francisco, the Santacon moved to Portland, Oregon, where the police liked Santa so much that they gave him a police escort wherever he went. This year, Los Angeles was the host city, with Santa Al of Los Angeles Cacophony Society fame, as the mastermind behind the event.

The first gathering place for the Santas – from Portland, San Francisco, Seattle, Chicago – was the Red Lion Tavern, a kitschy homage to a German beer garden, complete with waitresses in drindls who are willing to sit on your lap and squeeze your sausage. The Los Angeles Santas arrived early on that Friday night to act as welcoming committee. By the time the San Francisco Santas arrived – two busloads full of Santas and 35 well-to-do Santas who flew in – they got a well-deserved and well-libated welcome. A smorgasbord of Santas were in attendance: bald and silver-headed Santas, sexy slutty Santas, Zapatista-masked Santas, punk rock Santas, drum-circle Santas, gay Santas, cross-dressing Santas and the typical potbellied bearded (lady) Santas. Even a few Elves – people who were too cheap to invest in Santa costumes – made it down and circulated petitions protesting their unfair working conditions.

The Santas slowly filled up the beer garden, until the proprietor told us that Santa indeed had a curfew and had to be inside before midnight struck. It seems that the LAPD will not let Santa drink outdoors after 12. Hmmmmphhh, we'll see if our men in blue get any good gifts this year. Left with no other choice, the Santas descended into the main room to enjoy the Casio-powered Christmas pop. Santas went around to all the menfolk in the tavern, dangled on their laps and asked them, one by one, what they wanted for Christmas.

The next morning, hungover, Santa went to Farmer's Market for his morning sustenance. After fortifying themselves, the Santas went to board the sleighs (disguised as tourist buses). Unfortunately, the sleighs were nowhere to be found. A sea of 200 Santas swarmed the enormous five-football-field-sized parking lot. After circling the lot in confusion three or four times, the sleighs finally appeared and away we went.

The first stop was Venice Beach. Santa Al, our fearless leader, handed out garbage bags for us all to participate in a beach cleanup. This so-called community service was really a carefully constructed ruse to avoid any problems with the aforementioned-and-always-feared men in blue. We walked along the boardwalk and waved Miss America-style to the people as they ignored us. We passed out our presents – spraypainted silver envelopes with coal inside them – to all the little children. Content that our duty was done (causing at least one youngster to burst into tears), we headed for the sand dunes. Lined up atop a sand dune, Lawrence of Arabia-style, we gloried at the sight of Santas as far as the eye could see. One by one, Santas started running down the sand dune until it snowballed into a wave of Santas running toward the sea. Gratified by our commune with Neptune, we headed to Muscle Beach to see the wannabe Arnold Schwarzeneggars. We found a lone male working out who reveled in the attention of all the Santas so much that he invited us to pump iron with him. Hopping over the fence, we lifted weights, and did chin-ups and sit-ups as our muscle-bound friend lifted a San Francisco Santa barbell-style over his head.

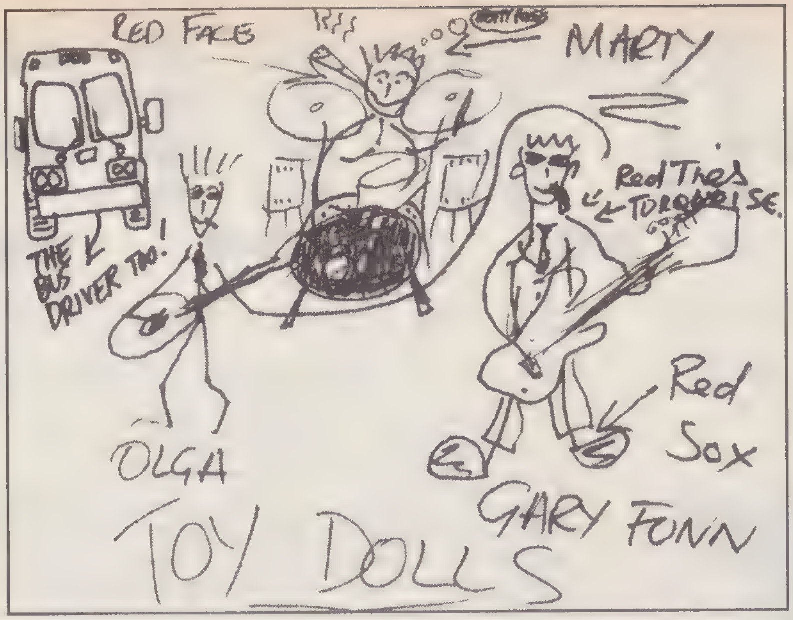
We then went back to our sleighs to go across town to the Hollywood Chinese Theater. Santa ogled the tourists and matched his feet and hands alongside the foot and hand prints of Rock Hudson, Julie Andrews, and the otherworldly R2D2 and C3PO. After posing for photos with the Japanese tourists and passing out more of our handmade presents, we went to go support our fellow Santa, down the street at the opening day of Scientology's Winter Wonderland. The sound of the Scientology Christmas music combined with the heady afterglow of the leftover star power that had seeped into us at the Chinese theater, incited us to rush the Scientology Santa onstage, sit on his lap, and surround him, all while shouting "Ho, Ho, Ho, Ho, Ho, Ho," nonstop. Unbelievably the Scientologists did nothing, only unscrewing the camera off its stand when a few unruly Santas started throwing L. Ron's presents around. Realizing that this would be a good time to leave, we boarded our getaway sleighs to go watch the sunset at the Griffith Park Observatory.

With no time to stage our planned "Santa Without a Cause" (or is it "Rebel Without a Claus"?) fight scene (we had to get to a strip club before 6 in order to gain free admission), Santa merely posed for pictures against the Los Angeles skyline and enjoyed the smoggy sunset view. Arriving at the strip club at 6:01, we all squeezed in, joined the two forlorn patrons already there and grabbed a good seat to enjoy the topless show. The strippers ardently performed for the Santas, taking dollar bills and giving a close-up view to male and female Santas alike. One even mock-humped a Santa doll thrown onto the stage. A few Santas got a lapdance (even Santa has his needs). The irritating announcer kept talking to the crowd nonstop, pleading with us to give the girls a little something extra for Christmas and to stop taking pictures. One punk rock Santa threw Chinese play money onstage, unbeknownst to the strippers until they counted it in the dressing room. After half an hour of the house talent, a dozen of Santa's finest "Hos" got onstage to bump and grind for the crowd. The owners of the bar, unable to cope with this final transgression, threw us all out, scolding us for being "naughty Santas."

Fine with us, for we were expected at a Hollywood Blvd. Mexican restaurant, which had laid out an all-you-can-eat Santa buffet. Modern-day Santa prefers margaritas to milk and cookies. After gorging ourselves and subsequently filling out our Santa suits, we walked down Hollywood Blvd. to the Palace to see a Vandals show, a celebration of the release of their new punk rock Christmas album. We walked into the lobby – Santa got in free – and continued to the backstage area where we declared to

Luis Bauz (right) and other Club Claudine VIPs

the first bouncer we saw that we – 200 Santas – were here to perform onstage. Astonishingly, he let us in without question. We continued on until we got to the stage ramp. They wouldn't let us onstage, so we contented ourselves with jumping up and down on the ramp until the bouncer turned so red with anger we thought he was going to cry. Beseechingly, he begged us to show him some Christmas spirit and leave him alone. We relented and decided instead to explore the dressing rooms. After wreaking a sufficient amount of havoc, we went back on the floor to enjoy the show and the sight of Santa in the mosh pit.



self-portraits by the Toy Dolls. recent U.S. tours have excited Selina. see comic(al) interview on web-site.

Afterwards, small groups of Santas slowly made it back down Hollywood Blvd. We had one hour to kill before the traditional Santa lynching. As my group of Sa[illegible]ere re-fortifying ourselves with alcohol, reports filtere[illegible]t two Santas getting beaten up by gutterpunks. It seems they beat up Santa just for kicks. The LAPD arrived to save Santa and took those gutterpunks straight to juvenile hall, as spectator Santas chided and berated them, telling them they'll get nothing but coal in their Doc Martens this year. But as it said on the Santa itinerary, "Santa beats up punks." Well, kids, Santa tried, but he lost.

The next morning, we had a good-bye breakfast at Phillipe's, sitting at the long tables amongst the circus pictures and sawdust on the floor. Half the Santas couldn't bear to put on their Santa costume one more time and only came dressed in a Santa cap or Santa coat. But most of us persevered and put on that suit. We ate our French dip sandwiches and drank our 25-cent coffee as people buzzed about the Santacon "next year in New York!"

CLUB CLAUDINE @ the Silverlake Lounge
by Squirrely Shirley and Epcott Fitzgerald.

Being Claudine Longet fans, Epcott and I were certainly interested in finding out what this club was about. Walking into the Silverlake Lounge and hearing the theme song to *Barbarella* was a good indication... and more good music they played: from '60s bossa nova (i.e. Astrud Gilberto and Sergio Mendes Bresil '66) to '60s French pop (i.e. France Gall, Brigitte Bardot, and of course, Ms. Longet) to more contemporary hybrids of the '60s stuff (i.e. Stereolab and Pizzicato 5). It's the kind of music I'd play if I ran the world (or had a club of my own), but these guys beat me to it. I, however, wouldn't opt for a place like the Silverlake Lounge. Though I'm actually rather fond of the place with its posters of bare-chested studly cowboys in tight jeans, somehow with such cool loungey music, you instinctively wish for an atmosphere that equals it in swankness, for instance: the house in the movie *The Party*. So we're there drinking our cocktails with hopeful hearts. For some reason the tiny 4'x4' darkened back corner didn't look too inviting. There's something amiss when you're playing such great "club" music and no one's dancing. Maybe they should've hired go-go dancers with false eyelashes and silver lipstick... The silver lining was that later on, the "dance floor" worked quite well as a stage for the night's performance: a highly entertaining comedic drag queen homage to Mia Farrow and *Rosemary's Baby*. The passing out of flowers and candy was also a nice touch.

Club Claudine has the makings of a really groovy club, if it has the space. I wish club organizer Luis Bauz all my luck in finding a space that reflects the essence of the music and its time. Does such a place exist in this day and age? Bonne chance! (Epcott say ouais!)

Phil Hendrie
BID's favorite radio host
KFI, AM 640
weeknights 7-10
check it! & and our interview to appear on www.benisdead.com!!!

MAN OR ASTRO-MAN @ the Foothill
by Gloria Alvear and Mike Smith

When the Man Or Astro-Man phenomenon landed in Long Beach, they brought along earthling friends, the Measles and Delta 72 (sadly Joel Robinson was not among the passengers – though he sang the *MST3K* theme song at the night before's performance). Despite the Foothill's primitive technology, MorA still delivered an ESE (Extra Sensory Experience) complete with noise and B-movie dialogue samples and projections of other worldly textures/images on satellite dishes. All of this plus Starcrunch and Dexter X in stellar space vinyl was enough to bring an untamed human to her knees and kiss the feet of the space boys. Finally chaos overthrew, MorA was frightened off the stage as a neo-hippie drum assault was launched. Though their emission was aborted, their live performances transcend all recorded evidence of their (however fleeting) existence.

ATARI,TEENAGE RIOT, SHIZUO AND EC8OR
@ the Whisky Au Go-Go by Ryan Bigge

My limo driver got lost, so I missed Ec8or. Shizuo had a few good ideas that they worked into the ground: their female singer had a short skirt, no panties and "stored" the microphone in her cleavage for one song. Their football player-attired frontman set records on fire every few minutes, but it got boring all too quick. Then the riot started. The first 30 minutes of the ATR set was what rock and roll is all about. Take a frentic beat, similar to jungle, add some guitar and industrial elements, and then yell like the world's angriest anarchist kraut punk, and surprisingly, you have a recipe for success. My normal complaint about how boring it can be to watch "knob twiddler music" was alleviated by three vocalists jumping around every which way and screaming for all they were worth. Unlike their studio tracks, live, the screaming seemed far less harsh. Despite this, the microphones were constantly buzzing and feedbacking between songs, which only served to heighten the energy level. After thoroughly kicking our jaded asses, they took off for a breather. The encore began with Alec Empire and crew speaking to the crowd in terrible English, while the encore DAT rewound. Eventually Alec threw the microphone to some bald guy in the crowd who, given his 15 seconds of fame, chose to point out that despite the ATR message, this show, along with the purchase of their records, was merely entertainment. He doubted that a riot would come out of all of this. Alec took a moment to ponder and translate this message, before booting the guy in the head. Security prevented the bald guy from giving Alec his. ATR stormed off, and the ugly lights went on. The true fans waited, everyone else started pouring out, and sure enough, ATR returned a few minutes later to insult some shopping mall punks before kicking out the jams. The bald guy was right of course. Whether or not ATR can turn their momentum into anything more than a flavor of the month E ticket ride is doubtful. But this was as close to the anger and unpredictability of punk that tame indie-rockers like myself will be treated to in the all too corporate and predictable 1990s, where taking chances and having opinions means losing money.

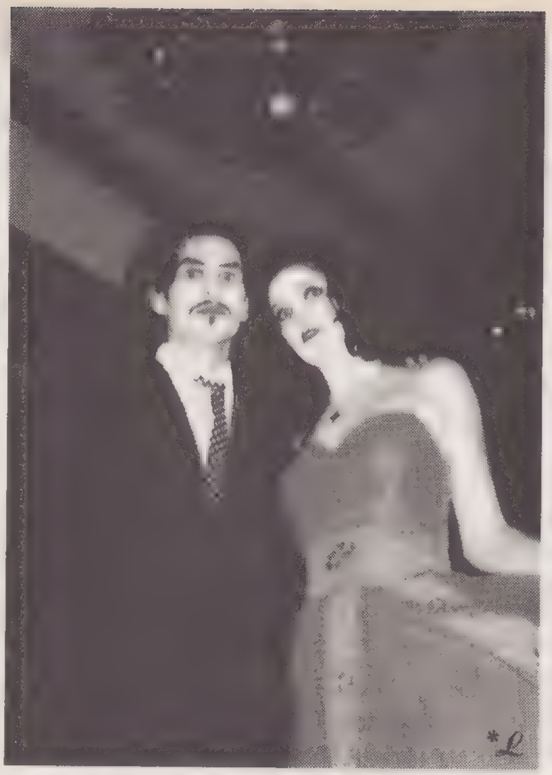
Santa Phil Glau (who won the prize for "bloodiest Santa" after his punk rock Palace encounter) hopes that the evening's majik show will cheer him up. (Lorraine's wearing make-up, Phil is not)

STIFF LITTLE FINGERS AND GANG GREEN
@ the Troubadour by Selina

I found some great seats upstairs in the balcony where a short person could see everything and not even have to get up to get a drink. Thanks to Gang Green I was supplied with sufficient beverage: beer, the only thing they drink. Chris, Walter and the rest of the band are really great to hang out with – no ego's and Chris gave me the best gum in the universe. I wasn't really expecting much because I never really got into any of their records, but I was impressed; they were incredibly tight and entertaining. Gotta respect any drummer that can drink beer and play at the same time, and at such an intense speed! How they all play that fast and do synchronized leg splitting jumps is beyond me. Makes me

My new favorite band is Moog Cookbook. Two silver space cadets with bummed I lost my gym membership. Surprisingly there was no pit action; as I was ready to go in myself, you know there must have been something wrong with the crowd. If Gang Green can have the energy, those old fogies in the audience should still have it in them too. They pulled out old classics such as "Rabies", threw in some stuff from the new record which sounded like it was off their old records, and ended with their classic homage to straight-edge, "Alcohol".

After Gang Green ended, it felt like it took a year for Stiff Little Fingers to hit the stage. I half expected them to come flying down in a cloud of smoke from the way they played the intro song, "Go For It" alá 1980s Mötley Crüe. They certainly live up to their legendary status as one of the originators of punk (though their guitarist for the tour looked identical to Paul McCartney). To begin with, the sound was amazing, literally blowing us all away. The energy that came off them I cannot even describe. They played everything a true SLF fan would want to hear. The only thing they didn't play was "Gotta Getaway", which pissed me off, but they made up for it by doing their tribute to The Specials – who were at the show – "Doesn't Make It All Right." And the encore was almost the cause of my death. When they tore into "Suspect Device", the crowd went berserk and I came real close to diving off that fucking balcony.



the perfect couple? Rob **Possum Dixon** with girlfriend perform majik noir at the **WACO** record release party. though Steve Gregoropoulos is super, we liked the WACO orchestra best without the vocals. **The Centemeters** coupled something Su Tissue with something B52s and it came out sorta annoying, sorta genius in the raw... great as long as they keep the cute bassist. this was a circus event but only the ben kids thought they were supposed to come as clowns. –ed

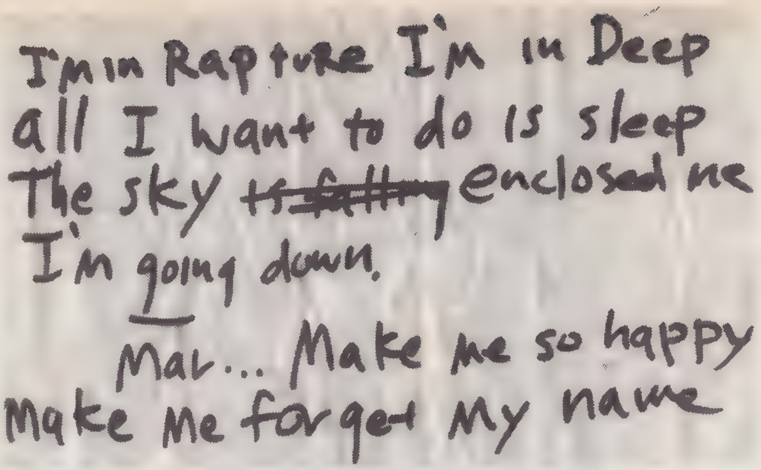
THE YEAR IN GUY ROCK******

by Lorraine (girl about town)

I'll start this review with **Amnesia** – Brad Laner (that Jewish guy who used to be in **Medicine**) composed a dreamy album called *Cherry Flavor Night Time* on which he sang and played most of the instruments with an occasional guested musician (like his brother Josh Laner, the then-drummer of **The Sugarplastic** – he since got kicked out and is now playing with big brother full time). In order to play live shows, Brad hooked up with the ex-rhythm section of **The Violet Burning** (that ex-Christian rock band). I would've gone to their record release party even if they weren't the gifted groove rockers that they really are, because that adorable freckled bass player is my post-high school sweetheart. I'm glad they actually are super good so I don't have to just pretend to like his band this time (though by press time he'st quit to play in **Lassie Foundation**). It doesn't get any more guy rock than **The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion** who had really good opening bands: **The Subsonics**'** strain of surfy punky sounds has to be experienced live, they reverb so much fuller than they do on their album. I was also diggin' **Speedball Baby*** until the angry and apparently punk rock singer became belligerent and started shouting attempted insults about L.A. – as if people in this city are really going to get their panties in a bunch over some loud New Yorker with Something To Prove (is anyone catching the Jon Bender references here? Shut up and get me a turkey pot pie). Note: if you like Jon Spencer, there's no reason why you shouldn't like Speedball Baby, because they accomplish a fairly decent rip-off. However, I was completely blown away when the real Blues Explosion hit the stage. The last time I saw them I wasn't totally into it, possibly because it was a shock at how slickly polished they now sound, or possibly because **Weird Al** was distracting. Anyway, this time I was right up front and sometimes it makes all the difference in the world – all of Jon's posturing is downright entrancing when viewed from less than a yard away. Driving home in Marky Satan's red 1971 Lincoln (*with* the suicide doors), we couldn't get those licks outta our heads. Versus the **Folk Implosion**: after working on the *Retro Hell* book with Darby and Nina all day (who had been bickering like only this never-ending project could make them – they almost had a fist-fight about whether pigtails and braids are or are not the same thing), it was a relief to get outta the office and unclench my stomach. This band was perfect for this purpose. **El Vez**, an hombre among hombres, played an amazing show replete with six costume changes – including when he strips off an entire velcro-aided mariachi suit with a flick of the wrist. The only disappointment was that my favorite El-Vette**** had been replaced with a not-as-buena impostor who strangely enough is also named Lisa Maria. I had to tear Estefany away (as she has quite the crush on El Rey - how can she help swooning over that Speedy Gonzales accent, pompadour and pencil mustache?) to go to *Lounge* magazine's third anniversary cocktail party at Encounters, that wacky restaurant structure in the middle of LAX international airport. Everyone was dressed to the nines in their finest rags, sipping pricey drinks (good thing I wasn't buying) while enjoying the view from the observation deck. If you left early, you missed **Tipsy,** a band with one guitarist, one xylophonist, one sample guy, one midi-fuck, and a DJ who languorously night-capped off the swelligant evening. The **Make-Up*** was Jabberjaw's farewell band. When I arrived, the show had apparently been sold out for hours (which explains why Shirley and Epcott weren't inside waiting to meet me, which doesn't completely explain why I looked like a big friendless dork, but luckily Adam and Skylaire were there for me to latch onto and force them to feed me Crispin Glover stories). So anyway, the only reason I got into the show was that right when I was being turned away, the Make-Up were piling out of their van after a costume change (they kept their matching suit jackets on for most of the show – fucking *heroic* considering the sweltering heat) and luckily they recognized me from last summer's Killzine tour where they played a few of our dates. Somehow this acknowledgment boosted my credibility, and the doorguy (who's drunken girlfriend smashed his cherried-out '61 Galaxy into a Del Taco drive-thru in Long Beach – her bloody hand print is still there – such is the stuff of which urban legends are made...) waved me inside. Back home, not too far from said drive-thru, **Dieselhead** played the Foothill with **Link Wray** (yes, *the* Link Wray). It's possible that Dieselhead has invented their own genre: hypnobilly western without being country? A really amazing set, and another one afterwards (as half of the band was backing Link Wray along with his wife who did not step off the stage and would periodically flit forward to his stool and tighten his dyed-black ponytail and wave it at the audience – I kid you not. Most everyone there was too awe-struck to acknowledge the patheticness. I don't mean no disrespect or nuthin', I'm well aware that garage rock wouldn't even exist if it weren't for him, and considering that he's about ninety and has forgotten more about the guitar than most of the bands around today could ever dream about knowing, I'll go stand in the corner and repent now). I know I would've enjoyed it more if I wasn't so exhausted that I could barely prop myself up against the metallic velvet flocked wallpaper, (though I did get to play pinball with a [former] **Neptuna*****). Did I mention how nice it is not to have to drive far for entertainment? When **Jello Biafra** did a spoken word gig at a bookstore a few blocks away, I was able to attend by bicycle – I think he woulda been proud, as part of his platform when he ran for mayor of San Francisco was that businessmen had to ride bicycles to work in clown suits. To complete the gesture, I drew big red circles on my cheeks with lipstick (OK, so I do that anyway). I would vote for Jello to be Mayor or president of anything, and I think he would do a better job than any politician around, but unfortunately, instead of seriously campaigning, he throws in some preposterous sensationalism (i.e. mandating drugs to be force-fed to bureaucrats), perhaps because the world doesn't deserve to be saved. Regardless, that man is one damn fine public speaker – I was truly transfixed (once I was able to ignore the jocks in the truck by the phone booth outside the Kentucky Fried Chicken reverberating in my head).

Sometimes you *have* to leave town; as I was going to be in San Diego for the day anyway, I went to go see **Firewater** (who would be the ideal band for Kurt Vonnegut's bar-mitzvah – if this band will be playing in the netherworld, when's Armageddon?) with **The Squirrel Nut Zippers**.***** The last time I saw them was a year before at Bimbo's in San Francisco, and let me just state the obvious here by pointing out the vast differences between the audiences of pre-radio hit San Francisco and post-radio sensation San Diego. I don't begrudge them success, especially when the band's as deserving and as rewarding as this bunch, but Oy Vey, did this audience get lost on the way to Starbucks? There were a *couple* a coolies there, and by the way boys, no matter how cute your checkered suit is, when you grab a girl you don't know and start swing dancing, you really should be sober or she's just going to be irritated when you can't keep the rhythm. Speaking of coolies who deserve to be Rockstars, that finally brings me to **Redd Kross**. Where does one begin? I've loved this band ever since I was little and used to go see them all the time. I didn't go to every show that they played because if I missed one, there would always be another in a couple of months. That was the life. Then suddenly, without warning, Redd Kross stopped playing. I would anxiously check the newspapers for a listing, but to no avail. Eventually I began to hear rumors of a new album, so my hopes brightened a bit. Then one day, the *Poptopia* '97 festival came to town, and **Shonen Knife***** were playing the final night so I secured some tickets. You can imagine my joy upon finding out that Redd Kross was to be the super secret surprise guests for the evening in their first L.A. show in over two years!! A cou-

five keyboards playing campy instro covers of '70s-'90s hits – sound good? Live it's even better! –Lorraine ple days later they played for free at Aaron's records - I went. I caught the Los Angeles and San Francisco stops of their international tour as well. I will keep going to see them play (even if it's in Orange County and it means running into people from high school – efforts like this are always rewarded, in this case by **Imperial Butt Wizard** Paul K. coming out on-stage for the encore in a bear suit to attack Jeff and sing "Deuce". He told me later he was bashed so hard with Jeff's guitar that his nose was swollen for over a week; the guitar wasn't in such good shape either, and I laughed so hard that my sides still ache) because what if they stop again? What if they start only playing stadiums? Their latest album, *Show World*, is so good that I see no reason why they won't become the Rock Gods they dream of becoming. [*yeah, right. –ed*] Back to Shonen Knife - those girls totally rocked; sometime during the past few years they actually learned to play their instruments, which on one hand is kinda disappointing as they were great as a cutesy gimmicky Japanesey girly band, but on the other hand it's awe-inspiring to actually hear their pop tunes done instrumental justice by the actual writers and not just by the bands who cover them on tribute albums. In fact, the only bad thing about the Shonen Knife show was this little encounter: after Redd Kross played I went to the little girls' room. When I returned to the front of the stage where Estefany was saving my place, a haggard old rocker couple had planted themselves behind her and were attempting to bar me from my former position. I pushed past them and stood next to my friend – more than a little confused by their actions, as now they were standing pressed up against us nuts-to-butts even though there was a foot and a half of room behind them, and Shonen Knife hadn't even come out yet! As I was still in such a glowing good mood (an extremely rare frame of mind – as anyone who knows me will attest to) from Redd Kross's smiley performance, I politely (also rare) asked them if we couldn't have a little space. All of a sudden the wifey starts yelling about how *her* husband PRO*DUCED* Shonen Knife's new album so *they deserve* to be in the front and we should just move! I'm more than a little taken aback at this attitude coming from a woman in the tightest stretch jeans I've ever seen (and I've seen a lot) while her husband, THE PRO*DUC*ER, stood smugly nodding his matching over-blow-dried fried hair. Stephanie told them exactly where they could go stand, and a fifteen minute junior high argument ensues where Mr. and Mrs. PRO*DUC*ER tell us how rude, ignorant, ugly, fat, immature, etc., we were for not stepping aside when Hel*lo*! have they checked a mirror since 1986? Who is 50 years old here and throwing a tantrum? We whisperingly decide that we'll relocate after two songs so they'll fume even more about their wasted effort, and we then enjoy the rest of the show from the side of the stage. About a half-hour into their set, I sojourn to the bar for a Shirley Temple, and who's next to me but Mr. PRO*DUC*ER. He gives me a haughty look so I sweetly ask if he's enjoying the show. His answer: "I hope so - I PRO*DUCED* them!" Get *over* it guy!



I'm in Rapture I'm in Deep
all I want to do is sleep
The sky ~~is falling~~ enclosed me
I'm going down.

Mar... Make me so happy
Make Me forget My name

when sneaking into the geraldine fibbers' dressing room before their simply brilliant show at the Palace, we found this note on the floor by the feet of new violinist Leyna Marika P. It's not good to goof on cheat-sheets when you're gonna be singin' 'em on stage! we like the Freudian slip – weirdo! Kids of Widney High got us 'tards all riled up, opening the event with their sing-along classics. Good pop songs just stick! –ed

---

* This band has token female bassist.

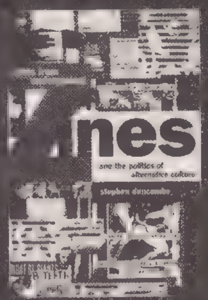
** This band has token female bassist plus gum-snapping stand-up chick drummer.

*** This band consists solely of three babes who wear great costumes - cannot be considered Guy Rock except in that their audience seems to be primarily male.

**** Two back-up singing, go-go dancing mamacitas.

***** Golden throated female singer/banjo strummer.

****** (Mostly)



Just Out From Verso

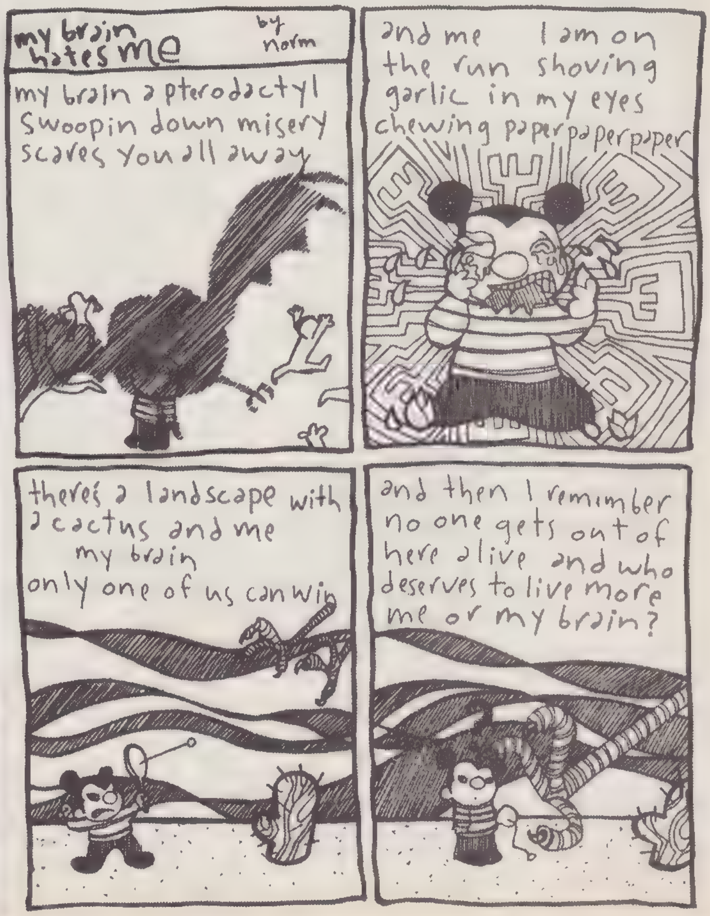
NOTES FROM UNDERGROUND
Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture
STEPHEN DUNCOMBE

'At long last, somebody's got it right. Duncombe does the essential work of cultural analysis that neither the national weeklies with their demographic fantasies, nor the czars of cultural studies with their determination to locate dissent in daytime television, can ever bring themselves to perform.'
—Tom Frank, The Baffler

Available from good bookstores everywhere or, in case of difficulty, call 1 800 233 4830 to order direct.

1 85984 158 9 $19.00 Paperback 288 pages

[illegible]

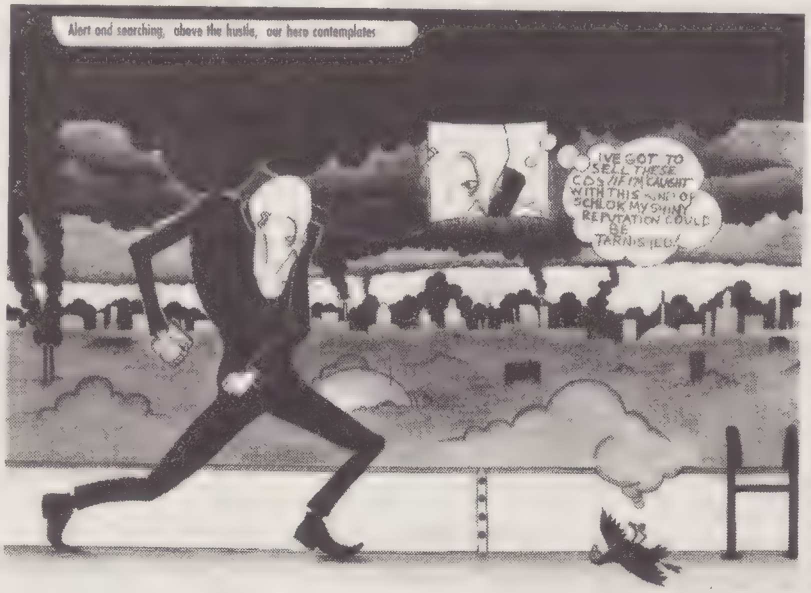


If u're interested in that psuedo-industrial 1998, skip the stale Lords of Placids and Kill Mother Fucking Depeche Moogs & go for the gold!

music reviews suck

and these are not an exception

BY BRIAN DOHERTY • CLIFF THURBER • EPCOTT FITZGERALD • ESTEFANY FIDEL • EVAN MACK • GLORIA ALVEAR • JACK OFTEN • LISA ANNE AUERBACH • LORRAINE MAHRU • MEREDITH DUNCAN • PATTY POWERS • RYAN BIGGE • SELINA ROMAO • STEPHANIE MUERER • THE BRAT


Alert and searching, above the hustle, our hero contemplates
I'VE GOT TO SELL THESE CDS//IF I'M CAUGHT WITH THIS KIND OF SCHLOK MY SHINY REPUTATION COULD BE TARNISHED!

8 1/2 SOUVENIRS SOUVONICA (CD) Not as quirky as the Squirrel Nut Zippers, but they make up for it in cosmopolitanry (sometimes singing in Italian or French). Wow can that piano man tickle the ivories (including those on the accordian). One of those albums that suits any occasion – black tie or otherwise. (Continental) [lorraine]

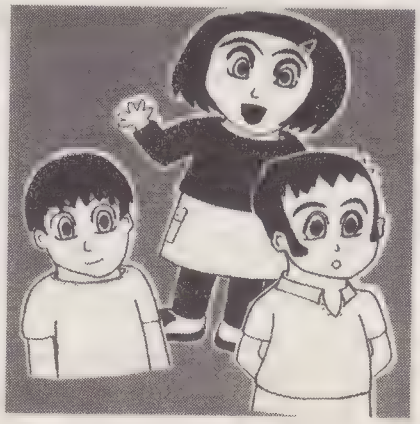
ABBY TRAVIS FOUNDATION SELF/TITLED (CD) Five years of university to ensure I can read a bio. To wit: Abby used to be in the Love Dolls and the Rails, turned rock goddess after touring with Beck/Elastica on the 1995palooza and KMFDM (that's her in the nurse outfit in the current promo poster). Abby has enlisted former Redd Kross keyboardist Geré Fenellie, and Meatpuppet Curt Kirkwood, the name drop memo informs. Now stop for a moment and imagine if I didn't just start the review like a Spin wannabe. Imagine instead that I said I listened to this CD without knowing jack shit about Abby, and found myself diving for the stop button by track six after enduring some painfully unfocused tunes. Pretty lady, ugly music. (You seem like a nice well adjusted person) [ryan]

ADIOS GRINGO S/T (CD) This is the most horrendous, horrible, awful CD I've ever heard In fact, it's the worst CD I've ever seen as well. The one good thing I can say about this CD is that it's aptly named: Adios Gringo!! Don't let the door hit your ass on the way out. (Paradise) [estefany]

APOCALYPTICA APOCALYPTICA PLAYS METALLICA BY FOUR CELLOS (CD) You haven't really heard Metallica until you've heard Metallica played by four cellos. These four Finnish cellists have high-falutin' training and a love for the complex sounds of Metallica. Put the two together and get something that Grandma might appreciate; music to fill in that epic generation gap. Beautiful and melodic at times, and then those versatile cellos get all gnarly. Sing along as if you were an opera star to this karoake metal. Maybe Metallica should trade in that drummer of theirs for a cello… (Mercury) [lisa]

ARCANA DARK AGE OF REASON (CD) If you were going to, say, sacrifice a puppy dog to a Nordic God, then this would be the perfect soundtrack. Languorous, brooding and orchestral, with a touch of the Druid about it. Some scary-ass castle with lots of trees that's boat-accesible is on the cover. Of course there's a hooded figure in the boat. On the back though, the band members look sweet and spacey. A man and a woman sit against the turnk of a tree. He's wearing all black and she's in a long beige dress. They look very natural. Go figure. (Cold Meat Industry) [lisa]

BANCO DE GAIA BIG MEN DON'T CRY (CD) Oh yes they do, and I should know. This big, bad, Honduran mechanic who I used to go out with (only because he bought me lots of regalos) is still llorando over me, and it's been casi a year. Every few months he still calls, and yes, every few months I tell him to chingar a his madre. He just doesn't get it. He cries, I laugh, he hangs up on me, I stupidly think that he'll never call again, he does, etc., etc. Like it's my fault I'm so irresistible to anything without a greencard. (Mammoth) [estefany]



bis was fun for a while, but we don't listen to it anymore. [d]

BANYAN S/T (CD) Uh oh, a Super Band, this one starring Stephen Perkins, drummer extrordinaire for Porno for Pyros, also enlisting able bodies Nels Cline and Mike Watt, as well as the Freeway Keyboardist which I suspect is Money Mark. This album is quite up front about being an experimental album, and an experimental album it is. Ideas are seemingly terminated in their gestation stage, and the jams are relatively static which tend to grate on you without much difficulty. This album annoyed in the same way as say Zoviet France or Hafler Trio, before someone convinced them to stop wasting blank tape. I love the Minutemen, *Double Nickels On the Dime* is one of those desert island albums, and Stephen Perkins is percussion man non pareil, but the problem with this album is the same as with many Super Bands and especially with experimental albums – they plain blow. Ban Banyan. (Cyberoctive) [cliff]

BEATNIK FILMSTARS ALL POP STARS ARE TALENTLESS SLAGS (CD) They hit it pretty close when titling this album – they would have hit it right on the head by titling it "all wanna be pop stars in this band are talentless slags". But don't get me wrong, these talentless slags are somewhat better then your run-of-the-mill talentless slags; there *is* a *glimmer* of hope, potential if you will. In any case, they (honestly if not redundantly) admit to being talentless slags in the insert. I do admire this – I'm a talentless slag myself. (Scratch) [epcott]

BEN LEE SOMETHING TO REMEMBER ME BY (CD) You've probably heard about Ben. You know, the precocious Australian youth whose former band, Noise Addict, was taken under wing by various alt-rock heroes like Thurston Moore and the Beastie Boys. He's now dumped his bandmates (and boy, must they hate his guts) and produced his second solo album. It's mostly acoustic meditations on being a young whippersnapper thrust into the world of international music sort-of fame. In other words, you can't help but hate the guy. The fact that all these songs are unmetaphorically self-obsessed doesn't help; they are all about him and his lucky bastard of a life in a very surface, artless way. But artlessness is sometimes a plus to the confessional singer/songwriter, so if you've an endless appetite for Joni Mitchellesque sweetly melancholic acoustic meditations on romantic loss/bragging, you might like this record a lot. Except Lee's nowhere near Mitchell's equal as a melodist or singer. While Ben is no great guitar picker, composer or melodist, he's still in there swinging with lesser folkie types – he reminded me most of early '90s singer/songwriter John Wesley Harding. One big down side: 16 songs in a row of similarly tempoed, similarly themed acoustic guitar songs are *way* too much if you ain't Bob Dylan, and Ben sure isn't. Just because CDs let you make your records longer than 40 minutes, doesn't mean it's a good idea. Big up side: the best song about making out with Drew Barrymore, falling in love with her, and then having her not return your phone calls ever written; plus another great one that *seems* to be about some sort of homoerotic menage a trois with indie rock celebs, a fun guessing game for gossip-obsessed record collectors. (Grand Royal) [brian]

BIG LUCY GIVE IT TO HER (7") Great band name, great record jacket, great songs. (Juicy Lucy) [lorraine]

BOTTOM HEAVY WHITE TRASH GANGSTA TRANCE (CD) I snagged this album for the title because (as I live in one of the LBC ghettos) the title sounded like my next door neighbors on one side got together with the neighbors on my other side and made one big happy album. However, even though there were no cartoon animals with bulging eyes or any neon colors on the cover indicating it as such, this is an album of rave music put together by various dj's and the like. Not that that's a bad thing – it was fun groovin' around my bathroom to it while applying my eyeshadow for the evening, (I ended up looking like a racoon, but I don't view that as a bad thing either). Techno without the Industrial makes for much less perturbation. Disclaimer: I haven't been to a rave since high school, and have never owned a techno album before, so I'm not really a connisouer. (Moonshine) [lorraine]

BOYSCOUTS OF ANNIHILATION (7") A four track single of dystopian drug noodlings. I think that if you're going to solicit any form of media

Rammstein not only dress well off stage, but their audience boating & pyrotechnics are of what great comedies are made.

to review your work when it sounds like this, it would be beneficial to send the record along with the requisite drugs needed to enjoy it. In this instance, some downers would have aided nicely, say Klonopins or Xanex Anyone who cherishes their copy of the soundtrack to *Liquid Sky*, or anyone who belongs to a Klaus Nomi fan club might find some solace in this [cliff]

BROKEN HOPE LOATHING (CD) This album sounds a little like running the garbage disposal with a forgotten fork trapped inside. Awesome blood curdling dischordant music with lyrics to absolutely die for. Crazy-ass illustration of a heart with an evil face and snakes and spikes coming out of it on the cover. These guys have a varied pallette, singing (chanting like a tired rhinocerus) about siamese twins, anorexia, shooting up formaldehyde, AIDS, black market corpse sales, and something about how Jesus was raped in a prison, discovering his feminine side. Most riveting lyric award goes to "Reunited" – a song about some dude who fucks his dead mother and then his dick gets all stinky and he has to set it on fire. "Forcing myself into Mommy's rigor-mortis twat." Ho-hum, right? (Metal Blade) [lisa]

CALVIN CRIME DRESS FOR THE FUTURE (CD) Casually disturbing. Bubbling sounds and thin sinewy guitar lines give this band a quirky edge. Generally their crooked angles explode into Jesus Lizard-like slam bam choruses, as in my particular favorite track, "Drag Dissonant." Fans of scream kings like the Cows will delight in this band's form of therapy Much of the album gleans its humor from a lo-fi production approach, some interesting spacey sounds and non-sequitur trash lyrics. To my liking, this band keeps their songs in the short attention span arena. This record will probably appeal to a wide cross section of indie-files on tracks like "Union Pacific" - that whole aggro Fugazi vibe rears its head providing a nice counterpoint to the lighter garagey tunes offered up. I can't tell you how to live your lives kids, but you won't be any worse for picking this one up. (Amphetamine Reptile) [cliff]

CAPTAIN T U S. ALIENS (CD) Bon Jovi is really an ex-CIA agent with an obvious double identity of JBJ, and Captain T – to you and I he poses as a Versace athlete, but the truth is that with the release of his U.S. Aliens disc, his disturbing reality is disclosed to all… that WE ARE THE WORLD, WE ARE THE CHILDREN, the '80s mega-hit had a negative mental response for some, including Mr Captain T. who seems to be a victim Per "T", it is time for the truth, let it be told: this CD sounds as though Cap'n fused his pre-pubescent A-Team memories with those of the contemporary X-Files only to OVER-produce U S. Aliens… "any press is good press. (Artificial) [gloria]

CHICKLET PREMIERE (7") Is this Lush… Chicklet… Lush… Chicklet… Lush Chicklet???? (Satellite) [gloria]

CHUBBIES TRES FLORES (CD) Originally I picked this CD because in a court case, I'd be considered an expert witness in all things chubby, but one look at the lanky girls on the cover made me realize that *they* indeed were not. The lyrics made no reference whatsoever to Doritos, gorditas, tacos, sopes, enchiladas, tapioca pudding, churros con chocolate or anything else that anyone chubby would love. However, upon closer examination, I realized that the album had a Spanish title. It seems I can't keep away from all things Mex. (Sympathy for the Record Industry) [estefany]

COMMANDER VENUS THE UNEVENTFUL VACATION (CD) What we have here doctor, is a case of indie-rock, pure and simple. Now if the patient is comfortable with a few mild side-effects, then we might consider letting the condition run its course. Our beds are full of far worse musical maladies, like all the broken hearts in the Hanson wing. Introspection and/or depression over current, past or present relationships will be mild in most cases. Enjoying discordant guitars and well-timed post-punk outbursts is completely normal. Wearing Converse products and using words like "angular" and "zeitgeist" in the same sentence are telltale signs of full blown indie-rockitus. For case studies of patients that have gone on to live healthy, normal lives despite being afflicted by indie-rock, look to viral hosts such as Archers of Loaf, Superchunk and Built to Spill. (Thick) [ryan]

CORDELL JACKSON LIVE IN CHICAGO (CD) A pioneer in rhinestone spectacles more than just another novelty act, Queen Cordell's still singin' and playin' a soulfull hillbilly guitar (unaccompanied) as she's been doing since the 1940s. (Bughouse) [lorraine]

CRAMPS BIG BEAT FROM BADSVILLE (CD) I put on this CD, and whaddayaknow! Raw tremello surfy garage punk! This sounds like a Cramps album – who wants it to sound any different? (Epitaph) [lorraine]

CREEDLE THE RISE AND FALL OF (7") Glue, glitter, hand-cut pictures of girls with mohawks… a lot of fucking effort for a record I wish would have broken in the mail so I wouldn't have had to listen to it, but it is a limited edition of 300 – so if you're into collecting crap, here it is (Rhetoric) [the brat]

CRISIS DEATHSHEAD EXTERMINATOR (CD) Some painting on the cover of a guy who maybe has spikes coming out of his eyes I wish this was a great record. Would be cool if it was even listenable, 'cause I like the idea of heavy girl rocker Karen Crisis going off at mach 12 There are a couple decent songs on here, but a lot of annoying high pitched screaming and I have very sensitive ears Imagine Alanis Morisette and then multiply the shit factor by thirty. One cool thing you rarely get to hear though, is that crazy Satan voice of death metal done with a femme touch. It's sort of interesting, I guess (Metal Blade) [lisa]

CROCODILES BLACK TAR (7") The Crapodiles. Elvis should have left the building. No more pompadour rock, no more '50s, no more Huntington Beach! (Velvet Blue) [jack]

CROWN ROYALS ALL NIGHT BURNER (CD) Not many people know this, but Estrus have recently resurrected the career of the semi-legendary Crown Royals. They first got their big break years ago when they were cast as the "Musical Guest" on the infamous un-aired episode of *Love Boat*. Aaron Spelling tried to have all copies of this television travesty destroyed, but a few copies survived, and I was fortunate enough to get my mitts on one. The big scene has Captain Stubbing escorting the lovely Miss Vicky around the dance floor to the "now" sounds of our own Crown Royals. The band takes a break and we see Meryl cooling his jets with far too many frosty coladas. It's a hot night and Vicky looks even hotter. The Captain sidles on up to Isaac and asks him for another dwinky poo, only this time he wants it "Heavy on the Booze and light on the cream." Isaac obliges him and hands the confection over with a wink and a smile. The Captain presses the glass to his lips and closes his eyes to ward off those dreadful spins… the spins are making it hard for him to drink as much as he needs to in order to tuck in the lovely Miss Vicky. Ah, sweet Vicky… those darling baby doll pajamas she wears. It must be well past her bedtime Meryl beckons Isaac for yet another, which is again served with a wink and a smile. The Captain salutes his ol' buddy, turns and drools his way back over to the dance floor. Julie McCoy tries to catch his attention, but he's over that dumb bitch. She was nothin' but trouble Gave him crabs and he had to go see the Doc (who examined his cock a little too fondly for the Captain's liking) Yeah fuck, he shoulda fired her a long time ago… but on to bigger and better things. Yes, we like this quite a bit… did I mention it's all instro? (Estrus) [meredith]

CURSE OF HORSEFLESH BURNING UP THE JADE (CD) First off, the cover art is amazing: muted reds and lime green dragons and other oriental cartooning. It's so rare for an album to taste as good as it looks, with horseflesh you don't even need the fortune cookie. Lascivious rockabilly with extra sweet 'n sour tremello on the side Reminiscent of the Reverend Horton Heat, but more surfy without the hoakiness that often accompanies surf music Dining at The Jade Restaurant is always a treat. (Roto-flex) [lorraine]

CURSIVE (7") I guess if you like the Afghan Whigs you would be excited, but ask me if I'm excited. . personally I think they're a little late to be jumping on *that* bandwagon. (Saddle Creek/Itu) [the brat]

DAMIEN JURADO VARY (7") Used to be in the band Coolidge, and now doing his own tear-jerking emo thing – good because it's not the typical Sunny Day Real Estate rip-off bullshit. (Tooth and Nail) [the brat]

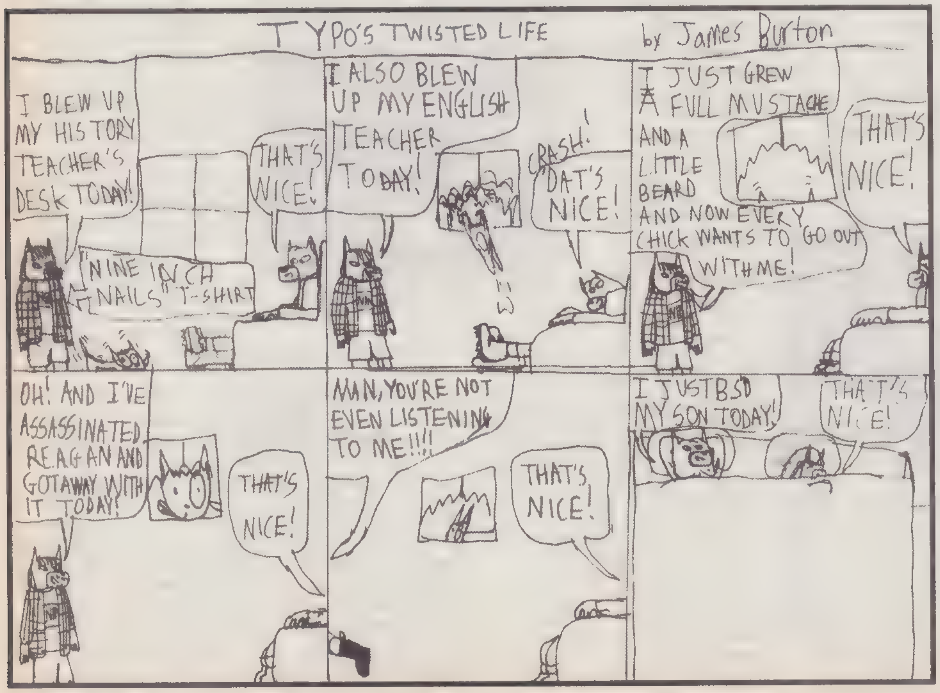
DEADSY S/T (CD) Their bio compaires them to NIN, Korn, and Gary Numan (no less), and promises that this release will be "worked" on college and alternative radio. If Sire had any sense, it would put some extra "work" into finding some new A&R people. (Sire) [jack]

DEATHSTAR STRIKES THE EARTH (CD) You might be able to judge a book by its cover, but you just can't judge a CD by its. The packaging for this CD is slick & silver with "3-D" cover art, (which doesn't work!), and comes with a complimentary pair of slick, cool "3-D" specs. However, putting on those wacky "3-D" specs while listening to it doesn't make the grungesque "music" stand out. I tried everything. (St. Francis) [epcott]

DECADENT ROYALS THE NEW GROOVY (CD) A member of this band sent an extremely complementary letter to *BID* headquarters saying how I was his favorite record reviewer and how great the magazine was. To sweeten the deal, he sent money for a subscription in addition to cash for a classified ad (see back page) I think we've all learned a valuable lesson by this, remember boys: flattery gets you everywhere, and if for some reason it doesn't, money talks I might even get around to listening to their album some day. (Grrr – see classifieds) [lorraine]

DEMOLITIAN DOLL RODS TASTY (CD) Many yummy things about this album, from the pretty pink CD to the scantily clad band member vixens on the cover who obviously know how to play with their food. This is my favorite cupcake out of the whole batch of reviews this time around; it has all the ingrediants to make your mouth water: simple garage-y drag race tunes that'll surely make you sing for your supper (in addition to your breakfast, lunch, and between meal snacks). (In The Red) [lorraine]

DEMONICS R I P.S.T.P. (7") What's not to like about late '70s garage punk style stuff? Great Kozik cover (iron cross = cool) and yellow vinyl. Too bad the record arrived with a chipped edge so only the second song on both sides could be played. Roll In Pee Swallow The Poop?? Rest in Peace Stone Temple Pilots?? (Man's Ruin) [the brat]


TYPO'S TWISTED LIFE
by James Burton
I BLEW UP MY HISTORY TEACHER'S DESK TODAY!
"NINE INCH NAILS" T-SHIRT
THAT'S NICE!
I ALSO BLEW UP MY ENGLISH TEACHER TODAY!
CRASH!
DAT'S NICE!
I JUST GREW A FULL MUSTACHE AND A LITTLE BEARD AND NOW EVERY CHICK WANTS TO GO OUT WITH ME!
THAT'S NICE!
OH! AND I'VE ASSASSINATED REAGAN AND GOT AWAY WITH IT TODAY!
THAT'S NICE!
MAN, YOU'RE NOT EVEN LISTENING TO ME!!!!
THAT'S NICE!
I JUST BSD MY SON TODAY!
THAT'S NICE!

Ed Dawson sent in the above strip, drawn by his 13 year-old son James. Uh, James is about 16 now! (Talk about time flyin')

DIABOLIKS DANGER! (CD) Every time I listen to this CD, it causes me to (once again) hate myself for neglecting to learn how to play a friggin' instrument during my formative years. Surely if I had mastered the recorder I would have moved on to bigger and better things, and would currently be in the Diaboliks an' life would be perfect. This band is a lovely little combo comprised of three stellar chicks and one swell fella that churn out a downright charming blend of garage pop that sounds as if it were coming straight outta a pocket-sized transistor radio. Yummy! My fave tracks include "Why Can't You Be Mine", "He's Got Everything", and "Guess I'm Falling In Love" which are all perfect accompaniments to the various stages of big messy crushes on boys. The Diaboliks are playfull and sexy in their delivery of said slop. They round out their sound with some nice steady thumpers an' some saucy vocals that would make Mistah' Russ Meyer himself a little pink in the cheek. Kudos to guitarist Dan for not being a big stoopid homophobe – only a real man could play a mean-ass gee-tar whilst lettin' the ladies wax about boy-lust an' junk. (Dionysus) [meredith]

DINOSAUR JR. HAND IT OVER (CD) When I first heard this, I thought it sounded so totally lame, like Blues Traveller or something – some folky experiment you might hear in a parking lot at the H.O.R.D.E. fest or the Renaissance Faire. But, instead of going ballistic on the pan right away, I kept it in the CD player for awhile, going about life in general, attempting to give the recording a fair shake. It continued to suck. I thought, "geez, weren't these guys good once?" and began to question even this. My friend came to visit from Vermont. She loves Dinosaur Jr. She has all their albums and sings along while she drives around in the Green Mountains. I asked her to listen to this CD and to please tell me if its great art or if it sucks the big Velveeta. She stayed for three days and every night I'd make her listen to it before she went to bed. Before she went back to Vermont, I popped the question. "Well??" She said the music was so dull she didn't even remember any of it well enough to even hazard a guess about its quality. Not a great endorsement, especially from a self-professed Dinosaur Jr. fan. (Reprise) [lisa]

action league
本郷猛
ゆうしゅうな科学者。サイクロン号にのって
走り、ベルトに風をうけて一号に変身する。
lion's den
we are so fragile

DOKKEN SHADOWLAND (CD) Dokken broke up in 1989 and the world was a sadder place. Then, they got back together and *Shadowland* appeared. Well, it's what you might expect. Pretty bad Dokken used to rule with glam metal love ballads, but now they've reached middle age and all their songs are about uncertainty and restlessness and heartbreak. Wackiest song is "Convenience Store Messiah". They sing, "he's a real convenience store Messiah, turning bottled water into wine." No irony here. The cover is a photoshop accident which includes a planet, some dudes dressed like it's the '20s, and a hand holding a crumpled drawing of a heart. Maybe they'll break up again soon. Hope for the best. (CMC International) [lisa]

DONNAS AMERICAN TEENAGE ROCK 'N' ROLL MACHINE (CD) The Runaways meet the Ramones (though these girls all share the same first name instead of the same last). Makes you wistful for the teen years (the last thing I ever thought I'd miss), though speaking as one who's older and wiser, if I were forced to re-live those days, I would spend a little less time being tough (save that for your twenties) and a little more time having fun – though they definitely don't need any maternal advice on how ROCK! (Lookout) [lorraine]

DROOLER KING OF THE COALMINE (7") Sounds like the Melvins and Helmet being tortured in an SS commander's personal torture dungeon. That's a good thing. (Man's Ruin) [jack]

DRUGS S/T (CD) Maybe these guys *want* to sound like Stone Temple Pilots, but that's their loss. Pop some pills and put all the instruments up for hawk… there, there, it will be OK. (Ng Records) [jack]

DYNAMO PLAZA BOUDET ARCADE (CD) Prodigy on prozac meets Jane's Addiction MIAMI STYLE, but Diego Duenas has nothing to do with it. (Threshold) [gloria]

EC8OR ALL OF US CAN BE RICH (CD) But not all of us will be. Case in point. Riding on the coattails of the hype surrounding Atari Teenage Riot and their newfound North American prominence thanx to their distribution deal with Grand Royal, comes Ec8or. Guess who they sound like? Duh. Granted, there are few other points of comparison to a female vocalist screaming into recording level reds to a jungle-esque, trip-hop, industrial backdrop. Less frenetic and more diverse musically than ATR, but more grating vocal wise. I got a headache five tracks in. The latter half of the album features Ec8or screaming considerably less, and my enjoyment level rising correspondingly. (Grand Royal) [ryan]

EL CAMINOS REVERB EXPLOSION! (CD) Considering that a '59 El Camino is my dream car, I was more than happy to listen to this CD. I don't know how I became such a fan of surf music – start off as the token female bass player in one Cramps rip-off band and you end up hooked for life. While I don't actually have anything bad to say, the most exciting thing about this band (apart from their name) is that they're from Japan. When you have as many instro surfy albums that I do, sooner or later they become indistinguishable. (Del-Fi) [lorraine]

ELEVATOR MUSIC THE DINNER IS RUINED ALBUM (CD) Umm… driven by multicolored levels of sound… yeah, tied securely with a silver cord. The cover art is bright and pleasing and I grin, but it still sounds like everything else to me. Gladly it didn't ruin my dinner. (Sonic Unyon) [epcott]

FEBRUARY TOMORROW IS TODAY (CD) Peaceful and calm like Mazzy Star. Put this CD on just before Mr. Sandman escorts you to sleepy-sleep land and you'll be guaranteed dreams full of wonderful, happy thoughts with puffy clouds and a big yellow sun with a smiley face painted on it. In this land of February generated joy, even the brightest yellow lemons taste sweet. (Carrot Top) [ryan]

FIREBALLS (7") Man's Ruin Records wins for consitantly having the prettiest colored vynal for all their 7"s; I wish all my records were such palatable shades. Fireball's just the right fence-sitting combination of power punk and speed psychobilly to be considered neither. I think I'd need to eat a whole album in order for my mouth to really burn, (though it did turn my tongue red). (Man's Ruin) [lorraine]

FLU THIRTEEN SPIN CYCLE (CD) Musically excellent even if it is a little dated (late '80s homestead art-damage rock). Every song pretty much kicks ass until someone decides to start singing (OK I'll admit it, I've got a big problem with vocals, I just think that most bands would be better off if they forgot about them entirely). There's an instrumental, "Polysorbate" which is good though. (Itu) [evan]

FLUFFY HYPERSONIC (CD) Ever put on a new CD and you feel like you already know it, have heard it millions of times? Fluffy is *that* familiar. I absolutely hated it on the first play. After reading the press kit, I was expecting a British girl band who'd one up the Slits. I'd heard some raves about them and thought maybe I was too premenstral and hateful to reviw anything. So I waited. Next time around, I could pick out the influence of the Stooges, Poly Styrene, and early-'80s punk/pop bands. Bands I loved. Needless to say, they grew on me. How could I not enjoy a band who sings about dildo masturbation and orgasm, not to mention the name *Fluffy!* (Enclave) [patty]

FOLK IMPLOSION DARE TO BE SURPRISED (CD) Can't miss with the Folk Implosion, if you dare to be surprised, thus if you are expecting another lo-fi project, you got another think coming, baby! Not that there are any Judas Priest covers, but this CD is as darling as a duck's baby… and speaking of babies, this seems indeed to be Jon Davis's baby that Lou Barlow helps deliver. (Communion) [gloria]

FOUR QUESTIONS HOLY TERRORS (7") One question: Why? Another: Where do all the CDs go after the 99¢ bin? (Terrible) [jack]

FRIGG A GO-GO EVERYTHING AROUND ME (7") Once again, 360 Twist! delivers the poop. All of the guys in this band are in definite need of a good shower and a healthy dose of Clearasil. I think I'm in love! Initially, the band's name made me a little wary as I have an aversion to anything that sounds even remotely cute, but there ain't a damn thing cute about this noise. No siree. *Everything Around Me* is a rant fest that spits the seed of angry maleness right into yer face, (so I hope yer gabber ain't hanging open like mine was). Messy but great if you like that sorta thing… sounds real good when yer on the freeway and there's lotsa traffic. Pre-Teen Love has got that swell doo-doo-do-doo bassline behind it, lotsa organ and barkin' vocals. (360 Twist!) [meredith]

FRODUS / ROADSIDE MONUMENT (split EP) I'm not so keen on the H.C. scene, but the two Frodus songs are pretty darn listenable. Rumor has it that their singer/guitarist, Shelby, is the Exalted Grand Master of the order of the Secret Cookie Society. Write to him and maybe he'll let you in on the secret handshake (Tooth and Nail) [lorraine]

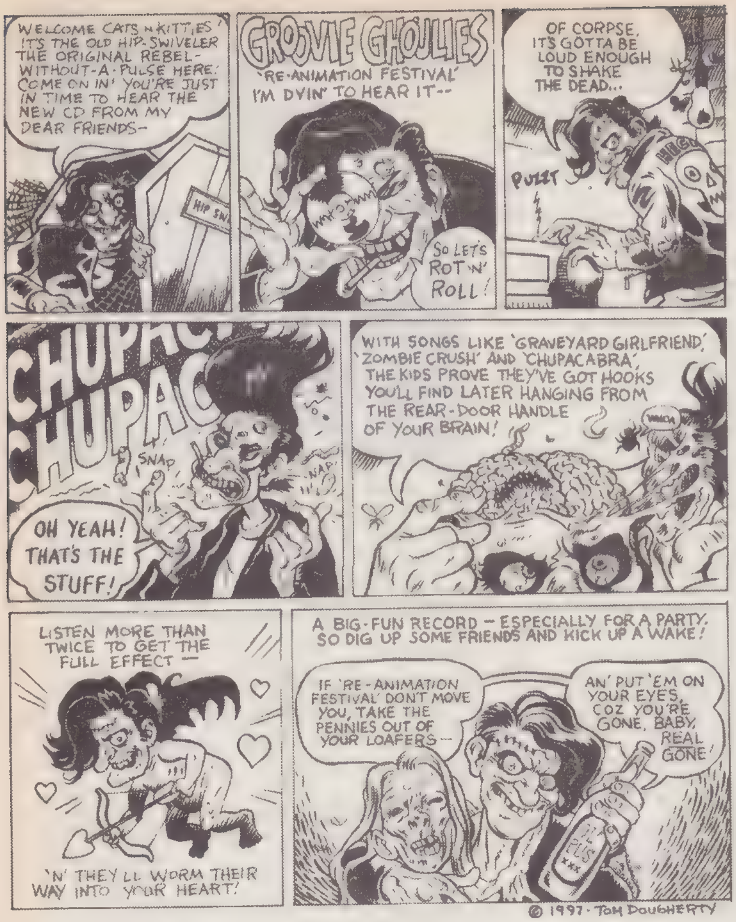
FUTURE BIBLE HEROES MEMORIES OF LOVE (CD) Stephin Merrit of the Magnetic Fields' new project, with two friends, one of whom is rumored to have been associated with the Thompson Twins. Fuck White Town – this is the real deal '80s pop-disco revivial. Echoes of OMD, New Order, and the Pet Shop Boys abound, but the songs are almost uniformaly great in their own right. "Hopeless" and "Blond Adonis" are only two hits so grand you'd swear you've been hearing them on KROQ your whole life already. And with titles like "She Devils of the Deep" and "Death Opened a Boutique," close lyric listeners will find much to mind as well. (But you'll have to listen closely. The CD booklet features a unique cryptogram for the lyrics of each song, so you'll have to do a lot of game-playing to see them written out.) (Slowriver) [brian]

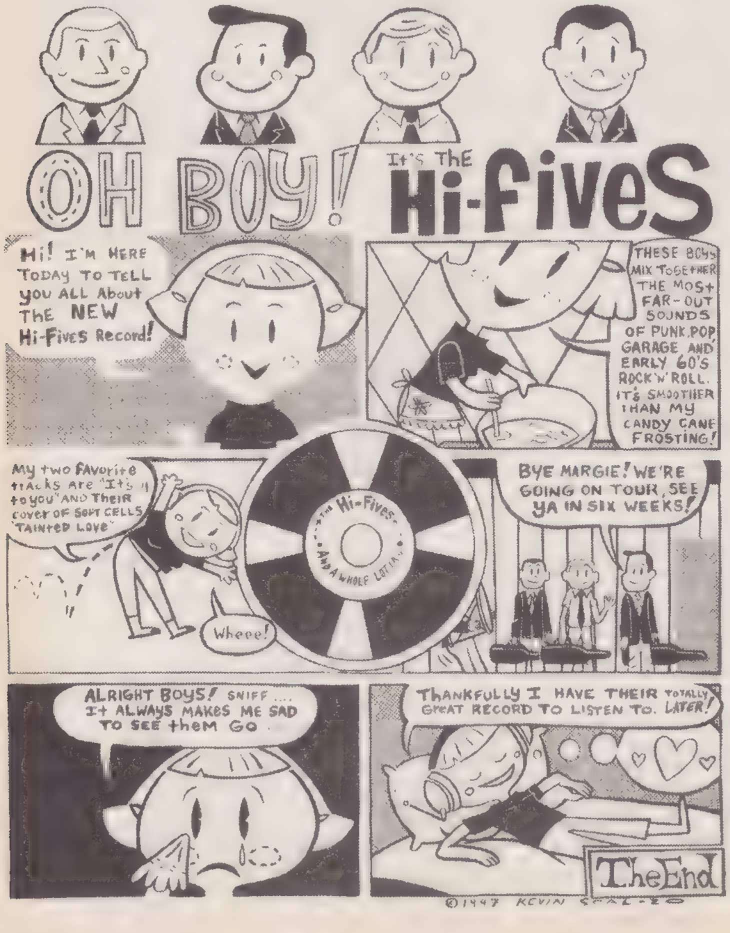
G. LOVE & SPECIAL SAUCE YEAH, IT'S THAT EASY (CD) G-Love's straight outta Philly, white boy groove special jive's always supersonic. Even better than Beck, and just as adorable. A few too many slow jams and mellowness this time around (this being album number three) which may account for all the hippie kids who now plague his concerts. (Epic) [lorraine]

GERALDINE FIBBERS BUTCH (CD) On their sophomore major label release, the Fibbers make a slight departure. Their first album, *Lost Somewhere Between the Earth and My Home*, filled with its random lyrics, proved them to be country/punk pioneers, especially attractive to the A&R types who were hungry for something new in the aftermath of grunge. But on *Butch*, the Fibbers seem to lose their footing a bit, experimenting with Muzak-esque stylings, and songs that seem more Ethyl Meatplow than Fibbers. Then again, there are times that they get down with the lap steel and sing about square dancing, making you want to scream out, "Patsy Cline is alive and living in Silverlake!" If

RUBY FALLS HEROINES (CD) Ruby falls short in that it's too well put together, it needs a flaw beside its self-defeating name. It seems that there are two singers: the wimp which never stops and the vamp which is only on two tracks. The vamp's voice is a better accent to the dissonant gloomy music, the other wimps out. I like the title "pretty feet", the eavesdropper in me enjoyed "Out Of Town", but how many times could one listen to this? As Ramona The Pest's parents said, "the first time it's funny, the second time it's silly, and the third time it's a spanking!!!" (Silver Girl) [gloria]

1 WORD REVIEWS by Howard Hallis. EL DUCE *Karaoke King* – Omnipotent. ELECTROSET *3 song demo* – Whoremoans


WELCOME CATS 'N KITTIES! IT'S THE OLD HIP-SWIVELER THE ORIGINAL REBEL-WITHOUT-A-PULSE HERE! COME ON IN! YOU'RE JUST IN TIME TO HEAR THE NEW CD FROM MY DEAR FRIENDS—
HIP SWI
GROOVIE GHOULIES
'RE-ANIMATION FESTIVAL' I'M DYIN' TO HEAR IT--
SO LET'S ROT 'N' ROLL!
OF CORPSE, IT'S GOTTA BE LOUD ENOUGH TO SHAKE THE DEAD...
PUZZT
CHUPAC CHUPAC
SNAP
NAP
OH YEAH! THAT'S THE STUFF!
WITH SONGS LIKE 'GRAVEYARD GIRLFRIEND,' 'ZOMBIE CRUSH' AND 'CHUPACABRA', THE KIDS PROVE THEY'VE GOT HOOKS YOU'LL FIND LATER HANGING FROM THE REAR-DOOR HANDLE OF YOUR BRAIN!
WHOA
LISTEN MORE THAN TWICE TO GET THE FULL EFFECT —
'N' THEY'LL WORM THEIR WAY INTO YOUR HEART!
A BIG-FUN RECORD — ESPECIALLY FOR A PARTY, SO DIG UP SOME FRIENDS AND KICK UP A WAKE!
IF 'RE-ANIMATION FESTIVAL' DON'T MOVE YOU, TAKE THE PENNIES OUT OF YOUR LOAFERS—
AN' PUT 'EM ON YOUR EYES, COZ YOU'RE GONE, BABY, REAL GONE!
© 1997 · TOM DOUGHERTY


OH BOY!
IT'S THE Hi-FiveS
Hi! I'M HERE TODAY TO TELL YOU ALL About The NEW Hi-Fives Record!
THESE BOYS MIX TOGETHER THE MOST FAR-OUT SOUNDS OF PUNK, POP, GARAGE AND EARLY 60'S ROCK'N'ROLL. IT'S SMOOTHER THAN MY CANDY CANE FROSTING!
My two Favorite tracks are "It's 4 to you" AND Their cover OF SOFT CELLS 'TAINTED LOVE'
The Hi-Fives
AND A WHOLE LOT!
Wheee!
BYE MARGIE! WE'RE GOING ON TOUR, SEE YA IN SIX WEEKS!
ALRIGHT BOYS! SNIFF .... It ALWAYS MAKES ME SAD TO SEE them GO
ThANKFULLY I HAVE THEIR TOTALLY GREAT RECORD TO LISTEN TO. LATER!
TheEnd
©1997 KEVIN SCAL-ZO

you're a fan of country's cliched death/love sucks themes, the Fibbers' fierce instrumental structurings and Carla Bozulich's whiskey-rasped "been there, done that" voice, then this album provides many reasons to wrench out your heart and two-step on your soul. (Virgin) (stephanie)

HATE BOMBS HERE COMES TREBLE (CD) This little disc pretty much shakes from top to bottom. Let the Lord bless America and its many trailer parks. Hate Bombs hammer out nice crunchy bluesy type poop that is a refreshing alternative to most of the stuff I usually listen to. Kinda reminds me of a big sloppy mid-afternoon (cheap) beer buzz. It tends to be all over the place, yet somehow manages to sound tight and melodic. The organ really helps to hold it together, but then again, it could be the gravelly vox up front. This is a *man's* voice goddamnit! There's a bunch of good stuff on here, and it all strangely reminds me of being stinky drunk for some odd reason… maybe it's the boozy tales about life in general, but I guess that sorta makes a heckuva lotta sense 'cause life is sorta like a hangover anyways, isn't it? Let your bad self know just how good a little hate can feel. (360 Twist!) [meredith]

HEADCLEANER PIGMENT OF IMAGINATION (CD) These guys are angry, and they're not afraid to let you know about it. I'm reminded of Fugazi's guitar sound. Nearly distortion free, crisp and clean. Their politics seem to be in the right place (they have a song against Shell) and they sound convincing, though the last few songs are too-long dirges that caused my concentration to wane. It's not a bad record, but not something I want to hear again either. Nice cover though. (Big Deal) [ryan]

HEPCAT RIGHT ON TIME (CD) You just can't escape from ska. One never would've expected it from such a loungearific CD jacket, but I've apparently been judging too many things by their covers… Will I never be able to escape from my past? Must that flight jacket adorned with Specials, Madness, and English Beat pins that I had for a brief tenth grade phase keep comming back to haunt me? I'll never be able to Rest In Peace, for the kiddies are skanking on my grave. (Hell Cat) [lorraine]

HI STANDARD ANGRY FIST (CD) Guess what this gem sounds like – hey it's punk because it says so on the cover – funny I didn't know punks were the guys in the raised 4x4's and wifebeaters listening to this crap. (Fat Wreck Chords) [the brat]

HICKEY THE NAKED CULT OF; "Various states of Disrepair: complete works 1994-96" (CD) SF's most antidisestablismentarians unleash 23 dirty war ditties that would make the (real) Unibomber cry. On their split 7" with Voodoo Glow Skulls, they rival Negativland's "U2" in which we get to hear big, dumb Frank from VGS make a jack ass of himself (ála Casey Kasem) in a series of stupefying death threats to Hickey while on "Epitaph Money." (Poverty) [jack]

HOT DAMN BEAVER SHOT (7") When did I say I didn't like fun music? I musta been in a bad mood or somethin' silly like that. You know when you wake up in the morning and yer all hot and wet but ya can't remember exactly why? You feel sorta tingly all over but the face of your dreamtime lover evades you? Well, this is sorta like that. Imagine the sound of engines purring and strippers stripping whilst ice cubes clink-a-clink in the swill that is a freshly stiffed gin and tonic. Nummy! (Dionysus) [meredith]

JACK DRAG UNISEX HEADWAVE (CD) Love the cover girls – taken straight from a '60s dress sewing pattern. I must like the music too, because I've listened to it a couple times when often after reviewing a CD it sits untouched in a pile until they get so dusty I'm compelled to trek down to the music trader You gotta admire a band who's not afraid of the tambourine. (Hep-Cat) [lorraine]

JACKASS REALITY BITES (IN SANTA BARBARA) (CD) A rip-offed Sonic Youth/Nirvana approach (so I'm sure they'll go far…) and a uniquely shitty title add up to a large cipher. Burn on sight. (Smilex) [jack]

JANE JENSON COMIC BOOK WHORE (CD) The cover and inlay are as cute as Jane Jenson sounds I really liked this CD – it's poppy but not redundant. She talks some of the lyrics, and when she sings her voice changes tones with each emotion which makes it sound animated. She's got good energy. (Interscope) [selina]

JOHN TRUBEE AND THE UGLY JANITORS OF AMERICA (7") What shithole bar did this band crawl out of with songs like "A Blind Man's Penis" and "A Deaf Woman's Vagina"? Sounds promising, but (surprise!) it's total shit – no wonder their label is called Musical Tragedies if it caters to shitty bands like this. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if this whole band is a bunch of midgets. (Musical Tradgedies) [the brat]

JON COUGAR CONCENTRATION CAMP / CIGARETTEMAN (split 7") One half Japanese '80s pop, one half Motorhead cover… I guess I don't like anything. (Liquid Meat) [jack]

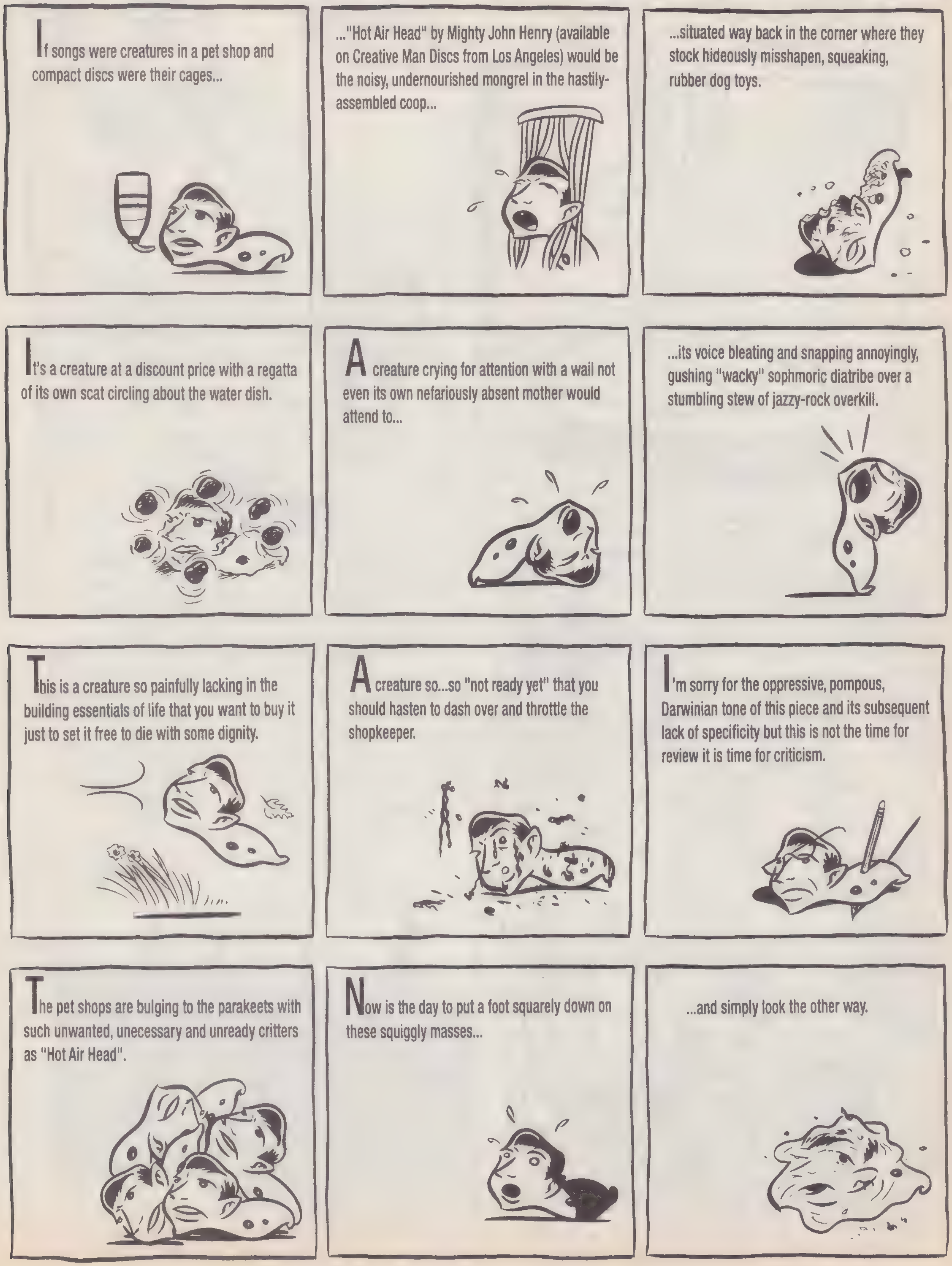
JUMPIN' LAND MINES ENGLAND'S LESSER KNOWN PUNKSTERS (7") How sad and pathetic is it that even bands in England rip off NOFX? These guys should actually be considered the "Least Known Upbeat-Alternapunk Band" instead. (Black Hole) [the brat]

LA PISTOLA (7") I work as a bi-lingual aide in a Middle School in the LBC, and this is a picture that one of my favorite students and his brother drew for me. Although it doesn't say smile now, cry later, or whatever that nonsense with the drama faces is that all my cholo kids are drawing, I think it's extremely relevant to this album. You know: vato, baggy pants, shaved head, there's probably a pistola hidden in there somewhere. Dios mío, the youth of today. (Frenetic) [estefany]

LARD PURE CHEWING SATISFACTION (CD) Soundtrack for a unibomber generaton; a pipe bomb up the ass of the establishment Companion piece for the *Virtual Government* book (see book reviews). Jello's back. (Alternative Tentacles) [jack]

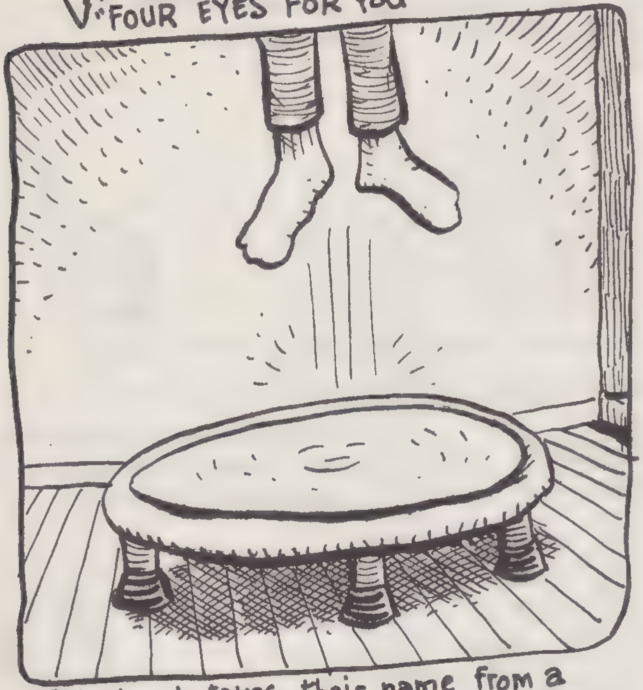
LEAVING TRAINS SMOKE FOLLOWS BEAUTY (CD) Doesn't Falling James (Courtney Love's first husband) look fetching in an evening gown and opera gloves! And now he has a Muff of his very own to play with (Melanie Vammen on guitar). This album kind of reminds me of a punky, grimey soundtrack for a cheesy, low-budget '80s movie, (which is by no means a bad thing). Also good background music

THIS IS GOING TO STING AND I'M SORRY, BUT... by Grumpy So and So Esq.


If songs were creatures in a pet shop and compact discs were their cages...
..."Hot Air Head" by Mighty John Henry (available on Creative Man Discs from Los Angeles) would be the noisy, undernourished mongrel in the hastily-assembled coop...
...situated way back in the corner where they stock hideously misshapen, squeaking, rubber dog toys.
It's a creature at a discount price with a regatta of its own scat circling about the water dish.
A creature crying for attention with a wail not even its own nefariously absent mother would attend to...
...its voice bleating and snapping annoyingly, gushing "wacky" sophmoric diatribe over a stumbling stew of jazzy-rock overkill.
This is a creature so painfully lacking in the building essentials of life that you want to buy it just to set it free to die with some dignity.
A creature so...so "not ready yet" that you should hasten to dash over and throttle the shopkeeper.
I'm sorry for the oppressive, pompous, Darwinian tone of this piece and its subsequent lack of specificity but this is not the time for review it is time for criticism.
The pet shops are bulging to the parakeets with such unwanted, unecessary and unready critters as "Hot Air Head".
Now is the day to put a foot squarely down on these squiggly masses...
...and simply look the other way.

Velouria

A REVIEW of THEIR ALBUM
"FOUR EYES FOR YOU"



This band takes their name from a PIXIES song (From the album BOSSA NOVA).

This FORCES me to compare them to the PIXIES, a comparison only a handFul of bands could survive. "Velouria" slips through the Fingers...

This album is garagey guy rock w/ some PIXIE-ish guitar bits meekly tossed in.

I would've liked them so much more if their name had been, say, "Jessie's GirL".

for scrubbing the bathroom (but would be too distracting for dishwashing and other kitchen chores), so grab those rubber gloves, put your hair up in a kerchief, bust out the cleanser and start scouring that filth! (SST) [lorraine]

LESS THAN JAKE RAINBOW CONNECTION (7") This record sounds like Weird Al Yankmydick done really, REALLY BAD. The Muppet cover album idea could have worked… I just know it (Liquid Meat) [jack]

LETTERS TO: ALIENS M CLASS EAST AND M CLASS WEST (CD) The alien has a nice package… I swear you meet the kookiest people involved in alien exploration, you get your good mix of new age hippies, conspiracy theory-obsessed hippies, and more hippies and more hippies There are some good exceptions, like the women who shave crop circle formations onto their heads and the the cute nerd-core boys who play their synthesizers all day; anyhow since this is a two CD package I'm allowed to babble… the highlight of the East CD is the obvious Helios Creed contribution, and the definite highlight of the West was his old band, Chrome with the tour de force, "Oh Dahmer" a parody of Richie Valenz's oldie which is very very wrong, but we like it. (Undercover) [gloria & mike]

LONDON SUEDE COMING UP (CD) Catchy and grandiose, very Manchester, very fabulous, and trés eyeliner Languid looking pretty people lounge on a bare mattress on the cover. A guy I know who is overly concerned with a hetero-sexual idea of macho-ness (he mainlines testosterone) claims that this band rules. He says that only the drummer is gay, or something like that, so it's OK Whatever They've got violins, they wear black and look very sad, intensely shiny shoes, plus a foot in the multimedia door. The CD can be played on your home computer for more treats. When I tried it, my computer crashed That is so cool. I wish I had some X. (Columbia) [lisa]

LOS COWSLINGERS MEXICAN BLACKBIRD (CD) A very sexy mexican bullfighter on the cover, or at least her bottom half What I want to know is, why isn't she wearing white pumps? nude nylons? tight hot pants? a too tight '80s prom dress? a white stetson? What is the world coming too? (Man's Ruin) [estefany]

MAD CADDIES QUALITY SOFT CORE (CD) Flavor of the weak… yet another bad third wave Ska band. In tragic news today, members of several popular Orange County Ska bands have plummeted to their deaths, having jumped off a tall building in order to save a saxophone autographed by CLICK! Members of the bands No Talent, Kill Ferris and Real Stale Dish were found impaled on a sharpened piece of a trombone stand… a note was found near the bodies stating "blah, blah, blah." (Honest Don's) [jack]

MANIC HISPANIC THE MENUDO INCIDENT (CD) I don't know how I feel about their cholo-style revisions of punk rock's greatest hits, (they're kind of like an El Vez for a punk rock audience), but I sure wouldn't mind if one of them fine vatos came over and took me cruisin' in their souped-up lowrider (Dr Dream) [estefany]

MARK EITZEL WEST (CD) I was merely attempting to enjoy the lyrical and musical mastery of Mr. Eitzel over my neighbor's blasting of Laura Brannigan and Journey, but I won, heh, heh. On his gizillionith solo effort for Warner Bros., (what are the rest of American Music Club up to?), he still proves that good songwriting will always succeed Part of an established "school" of songwriters, Joe Henry and the late Jeff Buckley among them, Eitzel, along with the aid of R E.M.'s Peter Buck, intertwines rich melodies and lyrics, with that dark, malt of a voice – take your pick, liquor or ice cream. Even though there are no lyrics printed in the liner notes, the way in which he weaves his tales makes you think of a great storyteller for times to come. On songs like "If You Have To Ask," you don't need to understand the lyrics; the haunting strings and guitar says it all. If you don't want to buy this album for yourself, at least spend the $12.99 for someone else – like my neighbors, so they'll stop playing Paula Abdul, and discover what real music is all about (Warner) (stephanie)

One of the in-house favorites, Jonathan Fire*Eater is built to last, and has all the important makings of a band girls should love to love; the Nick Cave for today. We hope our next interview goes better next time so we might actually print it. They were very sweet about it tho.

ME FIRST AND THE GIMME GIMMES HAVE A BALL PLUS BOWLING TIPS FROM GUTTER PUNKS (CD) What saves this all-star punk rock side project from being just another hawaiian-shirted power punk guy pop cliche, is that they only do covers, from "Rocket Man" to "Me and Julio Down by the School Yard" – how often are covers actually better than the originals? There should be more oldies tribute bands as there are so many great forgotten songs. They also do a really mean rendition of "Uptown Girl" that I put on my answering machine (Fat Wreck Chords) [lorraine]

MEICES ANIMALS (7") Their bio says they "have the energy of the Ramones with the vocal stylings of J. Mascis," have you seen the Ramones lately? (Real energetic bunch) And where the fuck *is* Sr. Mascis? It's good to know some people are trying really hard to be someone else. Two boring predictable songs… I'd rather watch *Small Wonder*. (Magwheel) [jack]

MELINDA SIMON AND MARK FAY SOUNDS FOR LITTLE ONES (CD) A whole CD of kiddie sound effects including seven different ice cream truck melodies and overtures from various carousels and other 25¢ rides outside of Kmart. If you're one of those people who sits around and makes compilation tapes for your little friends all day, you really must have this CD so you can put wacky little samples between songs. (Dish) [lorraine]

MEXICO 70 IMPERIAL COMET HOUR (CD) I've listened to the entire CD, and I'm still trying to figure out how they deemed themselves worthy of being called Mexico anything. Does the phrase "Counting Crows meets Hootie and the Blowfish meets Crash Test Dummies meets10,000 Maniacs" strike fear into your heart? Don't be fooled – they're not Mex, they just wish they were. (Big Pop) [estefany]

MOB LET THE TRIBUTE INCREASE (CD) Twenty formula songs of political British punk ála Crass/Subhumans/etc A couple of the slower songs had me thinking about The Jam for a second, but the rest of it just made me want to put on a Peni record instead. If you've got gobs of Brit politico-punk and need some more, well go ahead, and yeah, this *is* the same band from the early '80s (Broken Rekkids) [evan]

MOG STUNT TEAM 5 KING OF THE RETARDS (CD) They rev even harder than Man or Astro-man; starting their engine with a Cheap Trick cover that's so amazing I can barely stop hitting repeat long enough to enjoy the rest of the robot-thrash tire-screeching tunes. (Noise/Amphetamine Reptile) [lorraine]

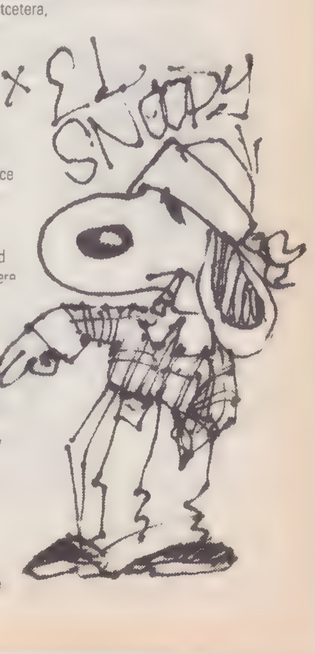
MOJO NIXON GADZOOKS THE HOME MADE BOOTLEG (CD) More of what fare we have come to expect from Mojo: good time juke bar blues. A lot of two to the bar guitar stomp with several familiar themes booze, aliens, drugs, girls and aliens. My favorite song would undoubtedly have to be "Bring Me The Head of David Geffen" and of course the Marijuana song with its dirty honky tonk piano. This a collection of 17 spoof rock hits Do the poontango! (Needletime) [cliff]

MONDO TOPLESS FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLAR HAND JOB (CD) When I first saw the movie *Welcome to the Dollhouse*, I looked high and low for the soundtrack. It was a pure pop masterpiece complete with Casio keyboard and dreamy vocals about nothing in particular. I was smitten. Still haven't found that damn soundtrack, but I actually quit looking when Mondo Topless came my way and righted all that was wrong in my world The Topless sound is basically driven by a big sweet swirling organ, that makes all other homogenized attempts at this sorta thing sound even more pathetic (if that's possible) in comparison. This disc has a touch of that "Big Rock Sound" that I usually do not go for, but Mondo Topless have such strong songs that I simply cannot help myself from being ga-ga over their jangly guitar and nifty vox (organ *and* voice) stylings. Their music is really pure and fun in a way that the Partridge Family coulda been – if Keith and the Klan woulda lost the pervert manager, quit hangin' out with Mom, started dropping acid and having promiscuous sex on that swell, gas-guzzling bus of theirs, they might have been able to pen lyrics like "You think I'm creepy. Well, I think you're wrong". Remind me to plagiarize/drop that line around friends and loved ones in the near future. (360 Twist) [meredith]

MORTIS TITLE IN UNREADABLE TYPEFACE AND POSSIBLY IN A NORDIC LANGUAGE (CD) OK, so you're using Arcana as the soundtrack to the puppydog sacrifice, and your next question is, "What about the march towards the altar?" Look no further. Mortis is the perfect evil death march music. A plodding beat, droning monk-like vocals, lots of drums, flutes, wizards and warriors slaying dragons, bloodletting at the castle. There's a guy in a hooded robe on the cover, reaching his arm up in some sort of Hitler salute-type move. This is creepy doom and gloom stuff, Swede-style. (Label may be Stargate Unlimited, but this, too, is hard to tell) [lisa]

MR. T EXPERIENCE BIG BLACK BUGS BLEED BLUE BLOOD (CD) A compilation of singles in chronological order 1989-1993 This is a must have for fans of the MRTE; perhaps of Mr.T as well. There is an entire "explanation" enclosed by Dr. Frank Berkeley for the 31 rawkin hits from Mr. T's memorable experience that will make you shake your bums (and ta tas, if that applies), and I pity the fans foolish enough to not buy this. (Lookout) [gloria]

MUFFS HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME (CD) So this band has always been great, the album's great, buy it, etcetera, but now I digress. when Shirley and I were watching that season finale of *90210* (masochists that we are), right before Donna's big sex scene (which was so skin-crawlingly revolting that we nearly heaved our dinner – did anyone else notice her uncanny resemblance to The Goddess Bunny?), a Fruitopia commercial came on blasting a familiar melody in the background the first few strains of "Everywhere I Go" off the Muffs' first CD Hey, if They Might Be Giants can sing the praises (literally) of Squirt, and Johnny Rotten can croon about Mountain Dew (what is it with beverage companies…) Don't get me wrong, I'm certainly not among the finger-pointers yelling "sell-out", (in fact I'm a firm believer in the cash-in-while-you-can school of



V/A STEERS, QUEERS… SATANIC TOASTERS OVENS. GOSPEL TUNES FROM THE BOWELS OF TEXAS (12") This record will give you the shits that burn all the way down. A fucked up, twisted, ass rocking comp. featuring Chapstik, REO Speedealer, Boxcar Satan, Fuckemo's, etc that kicks shit into the faces of Texas rangers and makes squares run home to their NOFX records. You can try to mess with Texas, but don't fuck with Ram at Tacoland. Also check out the Chapstik/Boxcar Satan split 7" if you've got any balls (even if they're in a bottle of formaldehyde). (Sutra U) [jack]

KID WITH MAN HEAD *Flapjack Hairpiece* – Coverartcool. KILL WHITEY *3 song demo* – RCCola. KING SOUR *Insturmentally Retarded* – Palmolive

thought), but did anyone else cringe when they saw that *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* episode with The Violent Femmes? (Reprise) [lorraine]

MXPX TEENAGE POLITICS (CD) These guys sound kind of like a generic Green Day with one exception – they're Christian. Cool punks sing about the lord, right? Dig on J.C. and rock out. "Believe in him, he'll open your eyes." Not a very badass attitude – Satan definitely makes a better motivator. Sort of amusing (for one second, tops), but absolutely disgusting too. Ugly drawing on the cover. Not very in touch with any historical idea about punk rock, but maybe this is the last frontier of offensive behaviour. No better way to scare the bejeesus out of the parents than to bring home a Bible and start parading. Weird and wacky use of Yiddish in the lyrics, too. I'd rather rot in hell with Slayer than party in heaven with these boys (not that I'll have any choice in the matter). (Tooth and Nail) [lisa]

NEGU GORRIAK IDEIA ZABALDU (CD) Don't say that they're Spanish, because Negu Gorriak sing in Basque. Although technically Pais Vasco is a part of Spain, they're all about independence from the Motherland. Regardless of all the political mish mash, despite, or possibly because of, the fact that I understood about ten words on the entire CD, I thoroughly enjoyed it. If you get a chance, go see them live, because they do a really good Basque cover of Fugazi's "Song Number One". P.S. I just realized that it comes with English and Spanish translations of the lyrics, (I like it anyway). P.P.S. The title means, "spread the word." (Grita) [estefany]

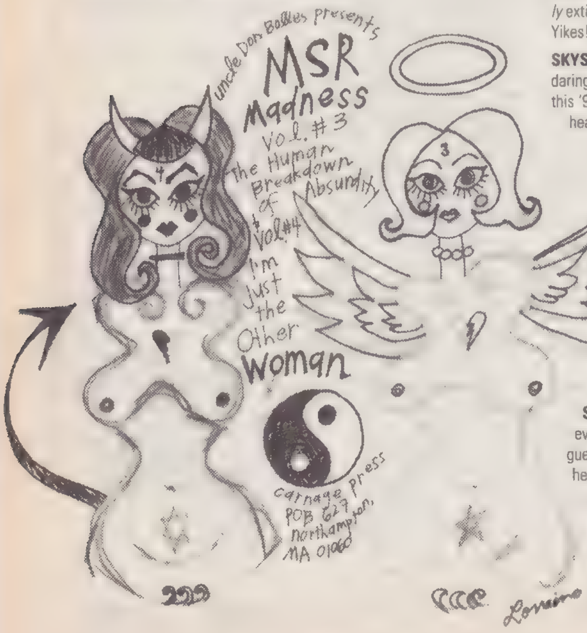
NIÑOS CON BOMBAS (CD) Because I didn't feel like staring at an elefante's nalgas all day (yes, unblieveable as it may sound, that's what they chose to put on the cover), I was forced to put this CD in the player. It rates higher than the cover art, was actually pretty good, but what isn't better than a packiderm's package? (Grita) [estefany]

NOBODYS THE SMELL OF VICTORY (CD) The smell of something… Isn't there enough of this out already? Does crap have to pile all the way up to the sky? (Hopeless) [jack]

OLD GRANDAD SAN FRAN666CO BOOTLEG (CD) Wow! Old Grandad sure has grown bitter. It seems that he's lost his sense of time; this retro metal ála Sabbath (not to demote Sabbath) gets real old real quick – I didn't even feel like seeking out my black MEMBERS ONLY jacket, not once! So if you feel so inclined to listen to something you've heard before, Ol' Grandaddy is hanging on for dear life for YOU! Make sure to explore the lyrics on an empty stomache. (Hectic) [gloria]

ONYAS LIVE FOR REJECTION (7") The front sports an evil looking biker perched atop some customized hog, while the back contains a fist gripping a can of Olympia beer while simultaneously giving the dubious digit. This image is framed in a penumbra of flames with some casual psychedelic swirls emanating from the background. The A side is some throw-away sludge tune with a polka punk beat – the kind of song you might picture the biker guy on the cover singing while he's swilling warm beer on a Monday morning. There is no intelligible difference between the A or B sides, I even got up to make sure I had flipped it over. Yep more sludge rock, as retro as it gets, crappy to the point of being so uncool it may actual be cool (maybe I'm retarded). I got the last couple of 10"s from this label (Kuyus and Melvins) and loved them, but this just sucks. Snot green vinyl too. (Man's Ruin) [cliff]

QUIXOTE MKR-07 (CD) Now I've read a good portion of *Don Quixote*, so I know what I'm talking about when I say that this band has no business whatsoever naming themselves after it. Where's Sancho Panza? Where are the windmills? Where's Dulcinea, the ever so lovely garlic vendor? No, this is no *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, even if there is a burro on the cover. (Makoto) [estefany]



RIDEL HIGH HI-SCORES (CD) It's not important whether or not I liked the music – there's a really cool pinball machine on the cover, and all things pinball are A-OK in my book. (My Records) [lorraine]

RUMFORD (CD) This album has a Spanish style cover replete with torridor and señorita, and that's about all I can say for it. That and there's a very nice picture of a sexy Mexican puta on the inside, and I'm all for putas. I'm pretty sure that if someone tried to blast this album early on Sunday morning, they'd be kicked right out of the barrio. (Dubious Honor) [estefany]

SCOTT FREE GARBAGE MAN (7") It's like a baby that keeps repeating the same sounds over and over again while it spins in a circle with a nail in its foot. (Leather/Western) [jack]

SHEMP SONGS FOR ROUNDERS TOO (demo tape) I woulda given this to Stymie for his demo column, but last time I never got my Double Dong tape back, and as Shemp is my new favorite intellectual cowpunk band, I didn't wanna haveta give it up. What the Dead Milkmen would sound like if they subsisted solely on amphetamine washed down with thirteen cups of black coffee. A guitarrist that makes up his own chords that actually work (and when these boys play live, man does it work!) is a man who I'll let buy me a shirley temple. (996 Redondo Ave #414, Long Beach, CA 90804) [lorraine]

SHOEGAZER INTOXICATED BIRTHDAY LIES (CD) A long time ago the term "shoegazer" applied to cute British indie pop bands (ála Chapterhouse) who were so adorably shy that while on stage they couldn't make eye-contact with the audience, but instead fixated on their converse low-tops. I guess *this* band adopted the term for ironic effect as they certainly don't come across as timid. So everyone's had one of those days when they can't seem to get out of their pajamas – while this album won't motivate you to shower and change, it *will* give you the strength needed to trudge to the liquor store and buy five dollars worth of junk food. Really, what greater compliment can be bestowed upon a punk rock record? (T.O.N.) [lorraine]

SKUNKWEED KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL (CD) Was anyone wondering what ever happened to Liquid Jesus and East Of Gideon? In the future when we've run out of new genres (and let's face it, that future is upon us), all bands will probably be interesting amalgamations of multiple past musical styles – in this case hard rock, glam, metal, dreamy druggy rhythmic, etc… Wonder what they could accomplish if they weren't so busy poking smot with Extra Terrestrials. I've known the singer of this band since I was 15, and at that age, Unrequited Love is no laughing matter. I saw a flyer that they were playing for free tonight. I hadn't even laid eyes on him for well over a year. I spent the better half of my adolescence jonseing for this guy. When I talked to him after their set, he told me that he now has a baby daughter. It seems like only yesterday that Kim, Randy, and I were sneaking into English Acid with the cheesiest swap-meet fake IDs in world, and when he tried to kiss me in the back room I was too petrified to kiss him back. I've actually been over it for several years, but if there were any nostalgic lingering sparks of hope still flickering, nothing *completely* extinguishes them like a pile of dirty diapers. Good luck Scotty… Yikes! (Royalty) [lorraine]

SKYSCRAPER SUPERSTATE (CD) What was once groundbreaking and daring is now mainstream fare – today's Journey or Styx. You *could* buy this '90s tough-guy attitude noise rock, or just turn on the radio and hear a hundred bands that sound just like it… your choice. (Dynosupreme) [evan]

SLOPPY SECONDS (7") *Come Back Traci* Anthems to Traci Lords (pictured on the cover in all of her underage glory) always make for a good time (side jAil), but their (Bait side) rendition of "Leavin' On A Jetplane" isn't quite as good as the Gimmie Gimmies' version. (Get Hip) [lorraine]

SLOW GHERKIN DEATH OF A SALESMAN (7") How many ska bands does it take to wipe a thirteen-year-old's ass? Four – one to drop the toilet paper and three to pick it up! Pick it up! Pick it up! (Bad Monkey) [jack]

SODA POP FUCK YOU S/T (CD) This band is shit and boy do we ever need more of that… anyways, bad music vs. bad name; I guess they've never heard of the infamous Soda Pop Smash. Oh here's something else new and innovative about them: they have a girl singer. (Bad Monkey/New Disorder) [the brat]

SPECULUM FIGHT HIGHBALL (CD) The album art is worth the price of the CD (I got it for free…). I can't say much else except that there's a great refrigerator solo on this. Noise and nothing but. (W.I.N.) [jack]

SYMPOSIUM S/T (CD) Riding your Huffy and a listenin' to pop hooks and sweet harmonizing make this CD a head bopping, gum chewing, bubble blowing, sucker licking, skipping and swinging lot of fun… great for alterna-rock birthday parties – without the calories!!! (Red Ant,) [gloria]

TANGER (7") Pretty rockin' stuff, kind of Jawbox-esque if I was going to compare it to anything – that or shoving my fingers up my ass, both prospects are promising. (Springbox) [the brat]

THOUGHT INDUSTRY BLACK UMBRELLA (CD) Touchy-feely has no place in metal, not that Thought Industry really quaifies as metal, anyhow. Why this crap arrived via a normally badass-heavy label is somewhat of a mystery. They sing, "are you depressed?" and what's worse, you can understand every word 'cause the guy ennunciates and the music is slow. The band photos look like they were taken in a photo booth and everyone seems super bored or introspective. One is yawning. They look as miserable as Sebadoh, and if I were them, I'd be sad, too. They're from Kalamazoo, Michigan. They make me sick. (Metal Blade) [lisa]

TIKI TONES SONGS FOR RUM DRINKERS (7") Hmmm… well I know this is technically really good, sounds great an' all, but it just is not my thing. The Tiki Tones do a bang up job o' this stuff, but I'm just a little burned out on it all. I might be tempted to throw it on for a change of pace, or maybe if I had a BBQ and wanted to impress other people's "hip" friends I'd crank this up and serve Veggi-Burgers, but I'm rarely that considerate. Go to someone else's house if ya wanna hear "polished surf guitar ála pig roast on the beach in Hawaii" type stuff. If you do pick this up, be sure and fix yer bad self a batch o' the Zombie 2000 drink recipe on the back. It's really quite refreshing. (Dionysus) [meredith]

TODOS TUS MUERTOS DALE ABORIGEN (CD) I saw this band play in Mexico City, and then later at the Whisky, and they were much too Reggae for my liking. I liked this CD however, because they seem to have scrapped the Irie in favor of something more enjoyable. Besides, not only is it a CD, but a CD ROM. I never would have noticed this, even though it says CD ROM about twenty times on the cover, but my sixteen year old brother, obviously a genius, catapulted me into the '90s and set everything up so that I could watch a nice little computer movie while I listened to the CD. Damn I feel so high-tech. (Grita) [estefany]

TOENUT TWO IN THE PIÑATA (CD) Having the word "toe" in the name of your band is already two strikes against you, considering that I really hate feet. (Remember, once you cross the border into California, it's three strikes and you're out.) I finally got over my initial nausea and was able to listen to this album (it does have the word piñata in the title, so I was hoping for candy inside). However, these are no first-offenders and their music has earned them a life-sentence. Adios ladies, hope you find cute girlfriends in the slammer. (Mute) [estefany]

TRAUMA SCHOOL DROPOUTS IDENTITY CRISIS (CD) Hey we're from NY. HEY! I wanna sound like Lint and Johnny Rotten going at it in a bathroom stall (it's pronounced 'alibut not halibut). No, I wanna be Adam Ant. No I'm 1977 – dig my mohawk and my British flags. If punk wasn't already dead, it would be coughing up blood in a shallow grave after hearing this one. (Caccophone) [jack]

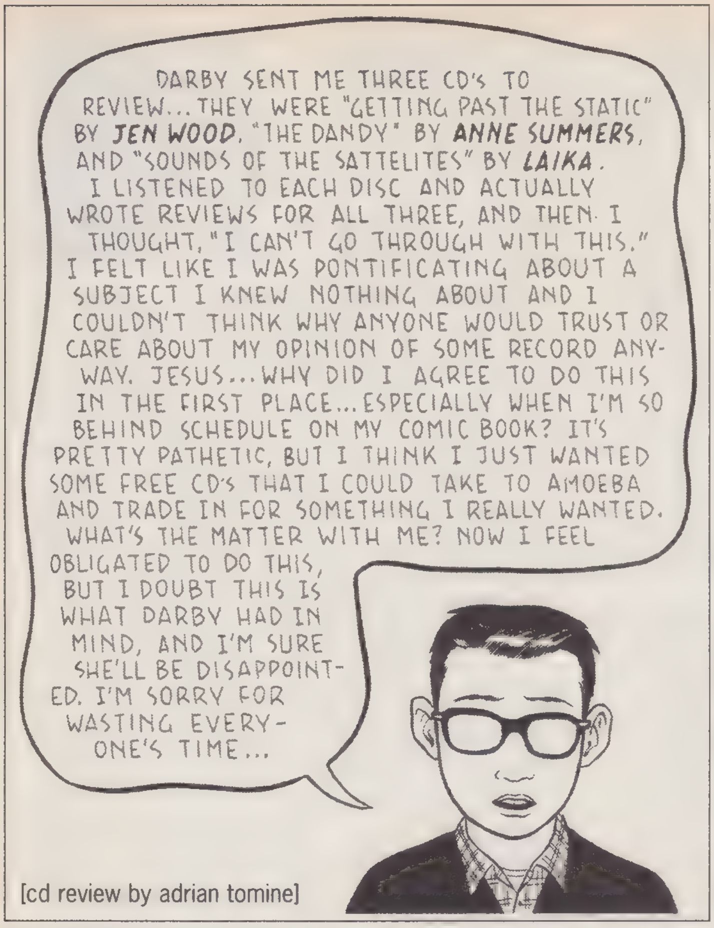
UFOFU S/T (CD) This album has two distinct personalities to it – perhaps a reflection of two different songwriters in the band. The first personality you encounter is that Supersuckers/Swing/Yall-ternative kind of thing – you know, pompadours or Stetson hats (take your pick). This style leads off the album on the first two tracks, then makes a reprise as the album draws to a close. The second style represented here is of the happy go lucky variety, ála Weezer. Of the two, I think the latter is my favorite. "Months Gone Bad" is a good example of this, a hooky intro quickly gives way to the bubblegum chorus before slipping into one of those oh so melodic guitar solos. "Pin Cushion Boy" is also a good representation of what's good about this album with its uber fuzzy bar chord riffing brand of disposable pop. The production on this is quite good and the band is pretty tight. If you're looking for some non-threatening pop, check it out. (Medicine) [cliff]

ULTRAVIOLET EYE HEROIN GEEK THE MOVIE (CD) My buddy Graeme once told me that The Smiths never performed "How Soon is Now?" live. That famous swirling riff is studio trickery, Marr would have you believe. Ultraviolet Eye do a cover of "How Soon" and dodge the swirly riff by doing it á cappella. Cute. Not to knock the band, but when your best song is a cover, and it's the second track into the album, I'd work on your original material further. There's definitely a spark of pop-rock ability buried in between so-so lyrics and competent musicianship. To give them credit, they have a sense of humor about themselves, something bands of their ilk could certainly use more of. I could see this being entertaining live after a few beers, but covering "Smoke on the Water?" Come on guys, you can do better. (Lost Arts Productions) [ryan]

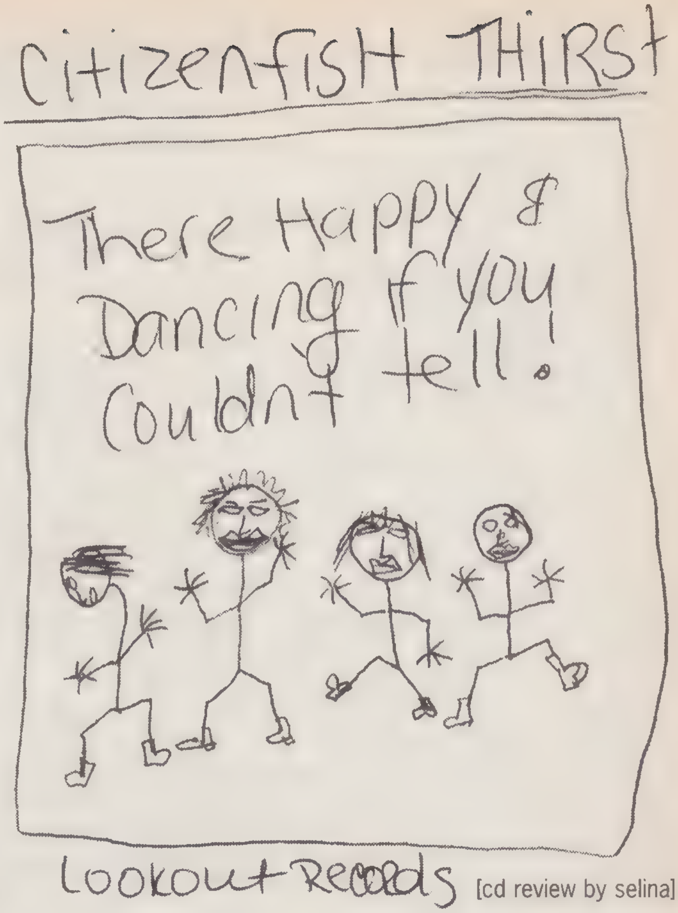
UNDER GIRL (7") As this is a 7", I was automatically playing it at 45rpm… it actually sounded better before I switched it to the proper 33 speed – I'll take chipmonk pop punk over melancholy Kathleen Hanna aspirations anyday. I switched it back so it would be finished sooner. (Black Hole) [lorraine]

UNION 13 S/T (CD) Pinche hijo de su puta madre, culero pendejo,

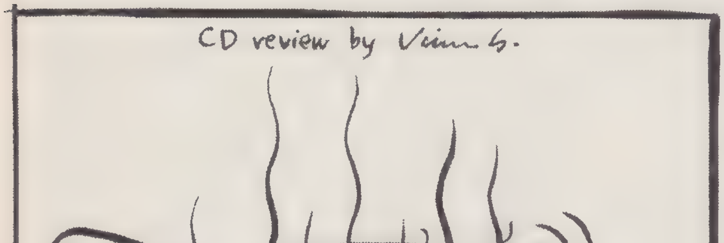
KITTENS FOR CHRISTIAN *self-titled* – Bottleneck. MAGIC PACER *Dig This Dig That* – Unbelievabrilliant. MISSY MISDEMEANOR ELLIOT *Supa Dupa Fly* – Smartbomb


DARBY SENT ME THREE CD'S TO REVIEW... THEY WERE "GETTING PAST THE STATIC" BY JEN WOOD, "THE DANDY" BY ANNE SUMMERS, AND "SOUNDS OF THE SATTELITES" BY LAIKA. I LISTENED TO EACH DISC AND ACTUALLY WROTE REVIEWS FOR ALL THREE, AND THEN I THOUGHT, "I CAN'T GO THROUGH WITH THIS." I FELT LIKE I WAS PONTIFICATING ABOUT A SUBJECT I KNEW NOTHING ABOUT AND I COULDN'T THINK WHY ANYONE WOULD TRUST OR CARE ABOUT MY OPINION OF SOME RECORD ANYWAY. JESUS... WHY DID I AGREE TO DO THIS IN THE FIRST PLACE... ESPECIALLY WHEN I'M SO BEHIND SCHEDULE ON MY COMIC BOOK? IT'S PRETTY PATHETIC, BUT I THINK I JUST WANTED SOME FREE CD'S THAT I COULD TAKE TO AMOEBA AND TRADE IN FOR SOMETHING I REALLY WANTED. WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH ME? NOW I FEEL OBLIGATED TO DO THIS, BUT I DOUBT THIS IS WHAT DARBY HAD IN MIND, AND I'M SURE SHE'LL BE DISAPPOINTED. I'M SORRY FOR WASTING EVERYONE'S TIME...

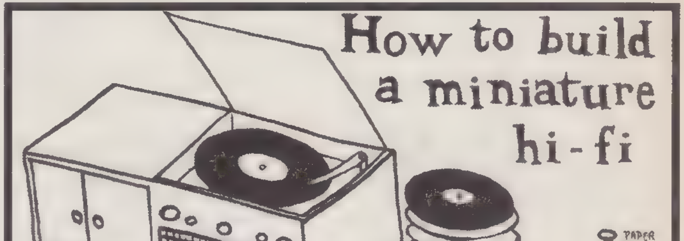
[cd review by adrian tomine]


Citizenfish Thirst
There Happy & Dancing if you Couldn't tell!
Lookout Records

[cd review by selina]


CD review by Vim G.
inside urethra:
WRONG-EYED JESUS! by Jim White (Warners) Didn't he write some famous pop song for someone? Art direction by Sylvia Reed (Lou's old ho)..
Vim G. ©1997

by Fawn Gehweiler



DREW NEUMANN *Eye Spy* – Aeonfluxuarydreamy. PAIN *Wonderful Beef* – Skajerky. POPCANON *The Kingdom Of Idiot Rock* – Quasimodemskazappers panocha, ojete, mamon, hijo puto, cabron, de la verga, pito, culo, chingada, punk rock. (Epitaph) [estefany]

UPHILL GARDENERS S/T (CD) What can you say about noise? Noise can be interesting, it can be grating, even pleasing. If you like noise then spend a few bills and check this out. I see this possibly being ideal for Lo-Fi film sound. It brought many (noisey) images to my mind. (W.I.N.) [epcott]

V/A FAME WHORE ORIGINAL MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK (CD) My review was so toxic I was forced to encrypt it and throw away the key. here it is: fgeyt98jp [dhj3277428ucnnc voivciur[094u 24u89 u4n h75483bbzksaythqqhwduhifngfue-wopdbwuyxcyeu3%##*% $^#&% #*^&^%^%(G^%G(&%^GRI)(T&^FVYK S X&$ #@& *^%O&TF GCT ZEWR@^*(&YL:><N NFX E R&#PKMB WRE*UP OJWE SZ579 45d45 d5uncr tcje tjc437j3475d 4jd475d 75jd47 45d7 j 457 (Apathy) [epcott]

V/A GO KART VS. THE CORPORATE GIANT (CD) Fits perfectly into the comix issue theme as the CD booklet is a mini-comic. Each of the bands also has a little blurb that includes "weird facts" and their "worst review". Gee Greg, what a great idea! (Go Kart) {lorraine]

V/A KAOS THEORY 89.3 FM OLYMPIA COMMUNITY RADIO (CD) This compilation is the most interesting item I've reviewed; these are 21 tracks of live performances done in the studios of KAOS – a good variety of rich jarring dischord and sweet harmony… just when it lulls me down to sleep I suck sap off a tree… highlights, too many to name. (K) [gloria]

V/A METAL MANIA MUSIC TO RAISE THE DEVIL (3 CDs) This is a three CD festival of metal featuring previously unreleased tracks from heavy bands like Disinter, Golgotha, Primal Hatred, classics from Slayer, Wesley Willis Fiasco, Insatanity, Carnivore, and dozens of other screaming intense folks. It's a hit or miss collection – some of the stuff is awful, but everyone gets an A for effort. Great music for doing aerobics, and a wonderful introduction to all those bands you've missed while you were listening to KROQ. The CDs are long though, and if you have a lame CD player from the '80s like I do, they start playing all kooky in their final moments. (Mike Hunt Music) [lisa]

V/A MUNSTERAMA (CD) Really cute cover: on the front there's the Wolfman, a mummy, Frankenstein and Dracula rockin' out – I guess to this album. The inside cover has an adorable devil with lots o' cleavage. It's a pretty good compilation, and I especially liked *Magic Teapot*, but even though this hails from Spain, disappointingly all songs but one are in English (Munster) {estefany]

V/A NANCY SINATRA'S GREATEST HITS (7") Seeing as I'm one of Nancy Sinatra's five existing fans, the prospect of a Spanish tribute record was extremely appealing. I put on my huaraches and got prepared to do some walking. However, this record is not in Spanish, as one is led to believe by the Spanish song titles, but in English (though the covers weren't that bad, and it did come with a poster of Miss. Sinatra looking as buena as ever). But what was the point of translating the song titles into Spanish if they weren't going to bother dubbing the lyrics? If these kids keep playin' where they shouldn't be playin', one of these days they're gonna get burnt… (Munster) [estefany]

V/A NOTHING BEATS A ROYAL FLUSH (CD) When I saw Curse of Horseflesh had a song on this comp, I threw it on and was treated to some of the best psychobilly bands ever. If you like this genre, you should *definitely* aquire this CD. And to think this hails from Canada – just when I thought all that the nation to our north had to offer was Gordan Korman books and houseguests who leave their underwear strewn all over the place. Wow! (Roto-flex) {lorraine]

V/A PAYDIRT: 18 JEWELS AND NUGGETS FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT SUB POP (CD) Actually a decent compilation of superfuzzy, folk-core, indie bands that I like well enough, but wouldn't necessarily want to listen to their whole album in one sitting. More importantly, the gem-infested cover art is doodled by one of my favorite artists, Mr. Fotheringham (which is the reason I snagged this CD from the review pits in the first place). The first time that I encountered his giggly, '50s-inspired cartoonery, (which for those of you who aren't familiar with, is kind of like a more curvilinear, curli-q'd version of the theme-song animation for *The Nanny*, who while we're at it I also adore) was on the cover of a Flop CD single, and have ever since delighted whenever I happen across his illustrations. He's been doing a lot of zine covers lately, like *Girlyhead* and *Your Flesh.* (Sub Pop) [lorraine]

V/A RECONQUISTA THE SPANISH ROCK INVASION (CD) Named after the 11th century attack of the Catholic church on those oh-so-heathen Jews and Muslims, this album is the quintessential guide to Rock en Español for the non-Spanish speaker. Put together by the who's who of the L.A. Spanish rock scene, Reconquista is like a tossed salad of some actually good bands (Mano Negra, Negu Gorriak, and La Maldita Vecindad), and some not so good bands' most palatable hits (Santa Sabina, Fobia, and La Cuca). Reconquista really makes it seem like all of these bands are worth a second taste, which is what it's meant to do, so if you're interested in checking out what all of your hip Latino friends are talking about, here's where you should start. (Zyanya) [estefany]

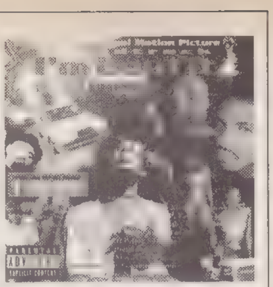
V/A SIXTY SECOND COMPILATION (7") Each band gets, you guessed it, one minute. How punk rock. I'll admit I have a short attention span, but not this short. While I particularly like Don Caballero and don't mind Flying Luttenbachers, Elliot Sharp and Jackwacker, all of which had interesting contributions, the nature of such a novelty really didn't give much to sink your teeth into. Maybe this is intended as a calling card to get people into the label and their roster of bands. At any rate it's pretty funny and lends itself to a collectable commodity status – it's probably limited edition of four or something like that. Drool collector scum! (Coat Tale) [cliff]

V/A TEENAGE KICKS (CD) The compilation (featuring FYP, 88 Fingers, etc.) to decide who will be the next NOFX/OP Iv pop punker unit to be bagged by Epitaph, but I can't tell the difference. The album cover is worse than if your dead brother drew it – but that's the point, it's PR, right? (Liberation) [jack]

V/A THE IGGY POP TRIBUTE WE WILL FALL (CD) Iggy Pop covers hailing from all corners of alternaville My favorite was the Lunachicks' version of "The Passenger" – even better than Siouxsie's old one. A portion of the proceeds from this CD goes to LIFEbeat, "the music industry's response to the AIDS crisis," so I guess you should buy it new instead of used (Royalty) [lorraine]

V/A TRIBUTE TO THE MISFITS VIOLENT WORLD (CD) Let's get one thing straight right now: "Tribute" records have absolutely nothing to do with paying homage to ones heroes. They're dreamed up by record companies and Lazy A&R hacks to capitalize on the sucess (an already existing fan base) of the band. These Misfits songs were cool in the original form, but hardly compositional masterpieces. I guess that's why they got a bunch of boring, by the numbers, punk bands (including Pennywise, Bouncing Souls, Goldfinger, etc.) to do the covers. I like the Misfits, but this thing is a total waste of material, time, money, and effort. Enough with these stupid projects already. (Caroline) [evan]

darby in 6.2



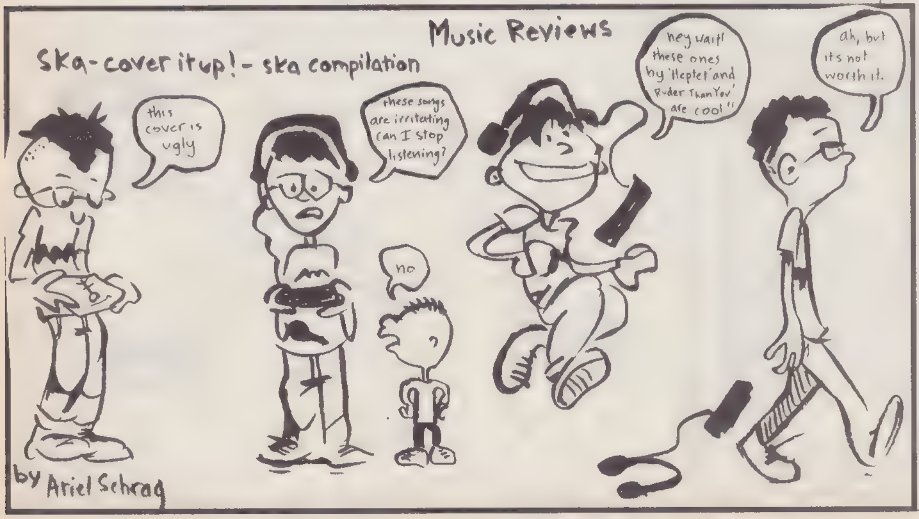
On my way back from a trip to New Orleans, trying to sleep on the plane but some unpleasant couple unhappy with the service kept us all awake Luckily I still had one eye open when some foxy black man came strolling down the isle. It was warm yet he was all decked out in leather, ski cap, and gold chains. I didn't notice until he was walking back to his seat that the back of his jacket was emblazoned "No Limit " Funny thing was just before my trip I bragged to friends that I was on my way to hang out with Master P. *Aaah, Master P!!!* When Evan told me he wanted to review all the gangster rap, I started putting them aside for him I had a big pile made up, 'cause this label NoLimit had just sent me a bunch of crap. The covers looked like the art director didn't know what the hell he was doing, cramming everything he could onto one CD which itself was crammed with a few CDs worth of music But they sent me this new video too, *I'm bout it,* and that's how my new infatuation began. This gang flick was poorly recorded, or perhaps I just don't understand gangster (I still haven't resolved this), but it was funny and intelligent and supposedly true. Master P's story (written, produced, starring, etc.) 'bout growing up drug dealing in Baton Rouge (or some awful ghetto close to it), and the death of his little brother from a corrupt Louisiana cop. Anyway, what I missed out on in dialogue was certainly made up in music, and I was rowdy bout it ever since So when that man in the NoLimit jacket sat back down I waited a few Mississippi's before careening down the isle to question him. It was Mo B Dick and he was the sweetest thing (these gangster rappers are just nice, polite momma's boys in disguise, huh) When we hit the ground I followed him to the baggage claim even though I'd carried mine on. I told him I wrote for many big magazines and that I hoped to interview him – and, of course, Master P – really soon. In the meantime the *I'm bout it* soundtrack and *Ice Cream Man* cds have permanent residence in my 10 slot car cd player, both packed with primo creative product, until they send me something new to replace it. 'til then, I'm all bout that drama

Might as well go to my next favorite. ***The Soateramic Sounds of Magoo** (Chemikal Underground/Beggars Banquet) – College rock with noisy guitar, good pop groove, echoed distorted vocals – really everything you ever wanted and all modernized to boot Songs 1 & 2 the most accessible – as if you cared But it just gets weirder and weirder. Like acid slowly taking its effect. It's not just a CD, it's an adventure! Others that made the cut: **Cornershop** When I Was Born… (was that genius or what), **Chumbawamba** (can't listen to it anymore, but it was nice to enjoy it before it's actual release), **The Pastels** Illumination (brings me back), **The Jazz Butcher**'s ¡Excellent! The Violent Years (Most of my favorites wasn't off the Creation releases but that made this CD almost new to me), oh, and lest I forget the quality soundtrack for ***Fast, Cheap, and Out of Control*** (actually, I don't know if they did a CD release of the music but if they did I'd love if someone sent me a copy . should I be embarrassed to admit I'd like a copy of the ***Titanic*** soundtrack too?) Okay, the rest is just hodge-podge reviews: **Cinnamon** The Courier (Island) – Another girl trying to sing like she's five years old (she's not!). Does anyone remember that album Barbara Streisand did with that song "I'm five, I'm five, I'm a big girl now I'm five…"? Well, I wish these pretend girlies would be honest and just sing preschool gaga **lowercase** Kill the Lights (AMRep) – Chokebore likes these labelmates. 'Nuff said? Oh, what does it sound like perhaps? Drony, pleasant, nothing beyond. A lesser Nice Strong Arm. Singer did the cover art ***Jah Wobble** The Inspiration of William Blake (Thirsty Ear) – Their aptitude for quality variety reminds me of Chumbawamba. As well as the anger, politics, intelligence, trilling Cockney accents. In Jah Wobble its less punk anarcho, more mystical electro-renaissance jah-jangle. Though there's some slower material mixed in here its subtle unnerving quality keeps you from achieving any calm Based on a painting by 19th Century artist William Blake entitled Good and Evil Angels (on cover) if nothing else it captures the pulsation of that image One of the best Cds so far this year. ***Semi-Gloss** (Dirt) – #1 song = Downey Mildew with French vocals The rest still has the DM guitar sound but goes more alterna-loungey. This girl's got some kinda voice You can hear it comes from deeper in her throat than most of them whispy-voiced femmes. This is real woman! ***New Wet Kojak** Nasty International (Touch & Go) – Less raw noise more techno-jazzy Jesus Lizard with sax and better versatility Someone needs to ask these guys to do the soundtrack for their next movie. **Moby** I Like To Score (Elektra) – Wake up to Moby as film composer and realize the massive talent that resides. Of course, you still have to *like* techno – unless you've got a programmable CD player you can set to pick and choose Still, these are probably better in the theater than the car **Thrush Hermit** Sweet Homewrecker (Warner) – This band looks like they're vitamin-deficient – it made me initially think they were from England. It's kinda a hard rock-radio rock-alterna combo I could like it maybe, but I don't have the patience. I do like the cover photo of them standing in flood gear. Nah, I could only like this for being so off – but it's not off enough. It's Qi deficient. ***Cagny and Lacee** Six Feet of Chain (No 6 Records) – Cagney does the instruments Lacey does the voice. I like it. Simplistic yet moody. I want to hear this in the mellow room of a dance club I'm not smart enough to know but I think they're all covers "Be Mine", "Memphis", and Minnie Riperton's "Lovin' You" win I think I'll keep it just long enough to put a few songs on a mix tape. **Abra Moore** Strangest Places (Arista/Austin) – Here's another baby-talkin' girly singer What does she talk like in real life? She's a hick with a lisp "Four Leaf Clover"'s got that jangly radio-friendly appeal I'm sure it's been played on all those stations your parents like to listen to Ah, she really does have a pretty voice Credit for writing almost all the music herself. I like some of the names of her "loving family" she thanks. Juanita, Mia Melina, Zack, Pepe Joe, Mai Lynn and Teresita. Yeah, buy this for your mom so she'll stop playing that Sade CD you got her five years ago **Poole** The Late Engagement (spinART) – I love their photo and the vocalist who sang on song #1 Five boy nerds from Virginia Again, what the hell should one expect from new music? This is recorded well, good song structure, diverse, and they thank all the right people in the credits. It's just so goddamn normal **Velour 100** songs from the rainwater e.p. (Tooth and Nail) – Pretty young girl with pretty young voice, with guy who looks vaguely similar to the Mazzy Star man Are they having sex? It's sorta similar to Mazzy Star in the way that I think many listen to it mainly for her voice, not the background music that accompanies it. It could be anything soft and heavy and ethereal Older 4AD fans might like. Fucking boring Maybe I just need to eat some lunch. **Dimbulb Trip Hammers** (Anti-Music Records) – Speed acid rock for the Butthole Surfer generation. They even have a guy in the band with the last name Coffey – close enough. Maybe Lisa AA would like this Headbanging shmorgasborg. There's something really retro late-'80s about it **Funural Oration** (Hopeless) – Holland pop punk on no-doz (and lager?) **Savage Aural Hotbed** Pressure of Silence (Ultra Modern/TRG) – Industrial noise for the umpteenth time This variety more lively due to hints of humanity thrown in in the form of a muffled groovy bass line or whistling sounds, or machinery just seeming to come alive. Industrial percussion gets funky without having to be tribal (besides on "Code") **Eddi Reader** Candyfloss and Medicine (Warner/Reprise) – Why do the Scottish all have this high-end trill? There's something soothing and unintrusive about this. Ask for it when you get your next massage+

* = I might keep and add it to my collection

+ = Since I rarely have the patience to listen to slower music I consider anything that might have the potential to make me relax "massage music". I imagine myself (in those rare occasions I can afford one) on the massage table and think about whether this might be nice to hear then

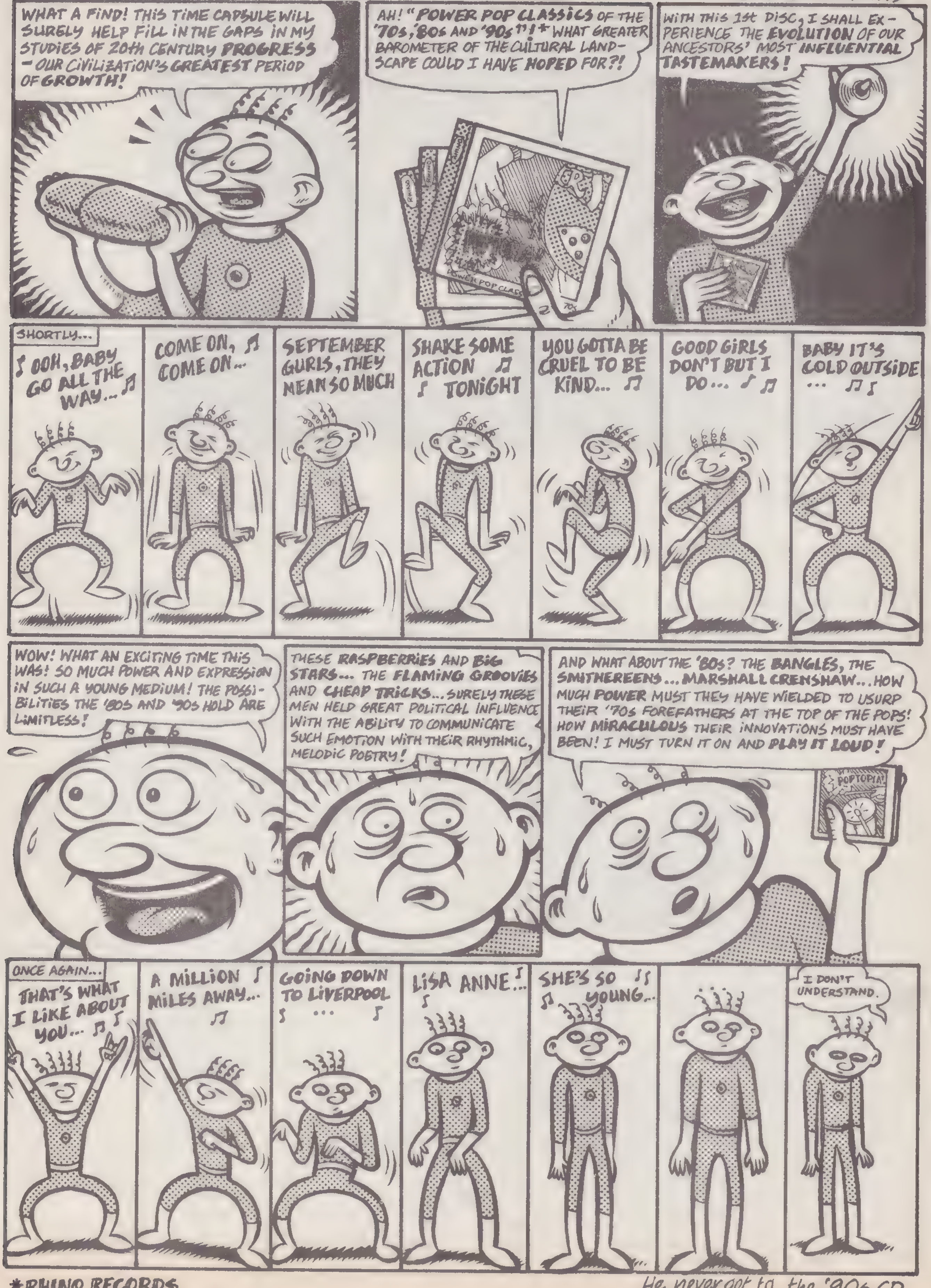
My reviews are special so they get a special box


Music Reviews
Ska-cover it up! - ska compilation
this cover is ugly
these songs are irritating can I stop listening?
no
hey wait! these ones by 'Hepcat' and 'Ruder Than You' are cool!
ah, but its not worth it.
by Ariel Schrag

THE SPERLINGS *Sea Of Sarcasm* – Lucydeakins. SPIRITUALIZED – Gontranquiloud. STIR – Cappucinocated

An Ostensible Record Review

©1997 ERIC REYNOLDS


WHAT A FIND! THIS TIME CAPSULE WILL SURELY HELP FILL IN THE GAPS IN MY STUDIES OF 20th CENTURY PROGRESS – OUR CIVILIZATION'S GREATEST PERIOD OF GROWTH!
AH! "POWER POP CLASSICS OF THE '70s, '80s AND '90s"!* WHAT GREATER BAROMETER OF THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE COULD I HAVE HOPED FOR?!
POWER POP CLASS
WITH THIS 1st DISC, I SHALL EXPERIENCE THE EVOLUTION OF OUR ANCESTORS' MOST INFLUENTIAL TASTEMAKERS!
SHORTLY...
OOH, BABY GO ALL THE WAY...
COME ON, COME ON...
SEPTEMBER GURLS, THEY MEAN SO MUCH
SHAKE SOME ACTION TONIGHT
YOU GOTTA BE CRUEL TO BE KIND...
GOOD GIRLS DON'T BUT I DO...
BABY IT'S COLD OUTSIDE...
WOW! WHAT AN EXCITING TIME THIS WAS! SO MUCH POWER AND EXPRESSION IN SUCH A YOUNG MEDIUM! THE POSSIBILITIES THE '80s AND '90s HOLD ARE LIMITLESS!
THESE RASPBERRIES AND BIG STARS... THE FLAMING GROOVIES AND CHEAP TRICKS... SURELY THESE MEN HELD GREAT POLITICAL INFLUENCE WITH THE ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE SUCH EMOTION WITH THEIR RHYTHMIC, MELODIC POETRY!
AND WHAT ABOUT THE '80s? THE BANGLES, THE SMITHEREENS... MARSHALL CRENSHAW... HOW MUCH POWER MUST THEY HAVE WIELDED TO USURP THEIR '70s FOREFATHERS AT THE TOP OF THE POPS! HOW MIRACULOUS THEIR INNOVATIONS MUST HAVE BEEN! I MUST TURN IT ON AND PLAY IT LOUD!
POPTOPIA!
ONCE AGAIN...
THAT'S WHAT I LIKE ABOUT YOU...
A MILLION MILES AWAY...
GOING DOWN TO LIVERPOOL ...
LISA ANNE...
SHE'S SO YOUNG...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

*RHINO RECORDS

He never got to the '90s CD.

A slow train to Seattle found me at a wild soire at the home of the family Bagge. Pete (front and center) told me the event was in my honor. While I pondered the idea that all these people would congregate because of me, or that they even needed a reason to have a party, I found he was telling another visitor, the artist Coop, that the party was for him (hmph!). But otherwise all-round-swell-guy that he is, Pete helped me coral these rebel artists (it was hard, believe me), for a never to be repeated moment captured. Jim Blanchard used some of those inking talents to point out all the stars. [darby]

V/A WESTCOAST BADBOYS II TRU 2 DA GAME (CD) For the past few years, Master P has been very busy crankin' out the West Coast Gangsta Rap at a furious pace. Most of the featured players are from the bay area (with the exception of Westside Connection and a few others) and don't stray far from the TuPac formula. You get your tender slow jams and bangin' beats about murder, guns, hos, drugs and such It's more brazen and offensive than most of the rap making news these days, but suffers from a sameness of sound on nearly every track (Priority/No Limit) [evan]

VIVORAS (7") I imagine that the two women in the band are pretty vein considering that look like they've been through a shipwreck yet they're still on the cover of this crappy record, but I'm pretty vein guy myself – how's my hair? (Get Hip) [the brat]

WA$H S/T (CD) I've seen this band zillions of times, and though this CD makes for a damn entertaining listen, I'm just going to quote exerpts from their press-kit rather than try myself "Without any apparent talent, they began playing (sneaking into all-night laundrymats, unguarded pizza parlors, parties they weren't invited to play, etc.) and were often pelted with manure, beer bottles, trash cans, and lawn furniture WASH realized that they had to defend themselves from their audience. Armed with a vehement disreguard for conventional good taste, they dressed in prom dresses, superhero costumes, see-through plastic suits, giant paper mache pineapple Satan heads and bad rubber masks, often stripping naked and lighting themselves on fire. Accompanying WASH's 'music to crash your car to' as they call it, was a clandestine propaganda campaign which included not only placing WASH 75¢ signs on every laundrymat in America, but also handwriting millions of "WASH ME" slogans on millions of dirty cars." Another interesting note is that this band used to have two babes go-go dance for them, but one became a born-again Christian and the other signed a pact with the Imperial Butt Wizards. (8-Piece) [lorraine]

WAYNE HANCOCK THAT'S WHAT DADDY WANTS (CD) How could I have ever considered myself a hipster without this album? '40s/'50s style western swing ballads (about girls and roadtrips) with dashes of yodeling, mariachi, and Hawaiian style, matched live with their Hawaiian-shirted, stand-up bass blues. When the Fly-Rite Big Sandy came up to croon alongside, it makes you wish you were a real cowboy, just like Hank Williams Sr. and Wayne the Train. (Ark 21) [lorraine]

WICKED FARLEYS KEN THEORY (7") I forgot that I was listening to this while I was reading *The Family Circus.* (Big Top) [jack]

WILL HAVEN EL DIABLO (CD) I guess this guy named his album after what he wanted to sound like – the Devil. (Sorry guy, I've heard the Dark One, and you sound nothing like him). That death metal, speed metal, death rock, heavy metal, glam rock, whatever the hell they call it lyrics are unintelligible, so I guess they *could* be in Spanish, although I highly doubt it. Mr. Haven here is just trying to trick all of us Mex-lovers into buying his album. Don't make a deal with Will Haven, because this pact sucks. (Crisis) [estefany]

WONDERBOY NAPOLEON BLOWN APART (CD) The title and cover are way too cutesy, an occupational hazard for revivalist bubblepowerpop. Fortunately, the music mostly avoids it – it's imaginative (within the limits of its chosen form), bright, muscular when it needs to be, and stuffed with loads of melodic and arrangement hooks. I'm a little bit bugged at how power pop, like the blues, is becoming nothing but a home for revivalist freak formal purists, but at least I can listen to power pop all day (some days at least), which is more than I can say for purist blues. Vocalist Robbie Rist (yes, the *Brady Bunch*'s cousin Oliver) is maybe sometimes a little too weasely-whiny vocally, but that's a minor cavil about a good record. L.A. is full of bands plowing this field (and Rist seems to play in most of them) and trying to create some sort of craze, which I doubt will ever happen. (Racer) [brian]

WUS POPSICLE (demo tape) I woulda given this tape to Stymie for his demo column, but has anyone noticed that there is no demo column this time? A band whose personality manages to drip into their songs: their sit-down brush-twirling drummer is also their head-bobbing singer, while his baby brother plays a Tiajuana acoustic guitar patched to a million dollars of racked amps – such a great sound while shaking his toy-ridden, ribboned dreadlocks and stamping his velcro-shoed feet (now that's some good style). Their new machine gun fretless, headless, flying-V bass player keeps up in the charisma department, and with songs about the Wonder Twins (to tie in with our comix theme, "yeah they got super powers and I ain't got nothing…"), I think I found a band I want to marry. (5401 Cerulean, Garden Grove, CA 92845) [lorraine]

YOU AM I HOURLY, DAILY (CD) A friend of mine once noted that there's a huge, gaping chasm between appreciation and creation. Worship the Beatles as much as you want, drool over Big Star, buy the Pet Sounds box set. However, your hobby does not necessarily a good band make. You Am I specialize in wistful pop songs with lyrics that make their girlfriends cry – partially out of fear that the songs are about them Umm. Right. Some constructive, positive feedback: I share their love of old skool guitars and microphones as evidenced by their album cover I like many of the bands they name check in the liner notes. If they were busking on a street corner, I'd give them some loose change, but the buck stops there. (Ra) [ryan]

ZENI GEVA NAI-HA (12") Recorded by Steve "Waldo" Albini, this album has the 666noisekillmethdeathmetal that victims (er, fans) of Neurosis and Crash Worship would jack off to… so start a jackin'. (Skin Graft) [jack]

the end.

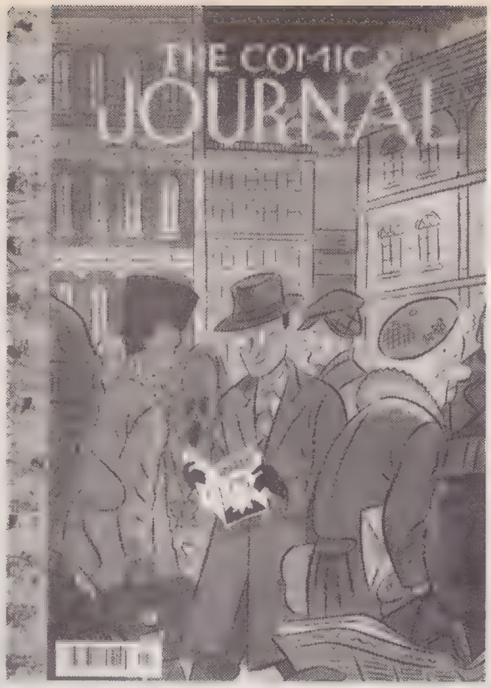
Okay, here's some of the unofficial rules around here. We don't pay attention to labels – unless we start to feel guilty cause we realize some small label or another is continuously ignored, or if we know a label is known for a certain kind of music and a specific reviewer will want to hear it (i.e. Lisa AA and anything that may possibly be speed metal), or if they've got a good track record and we're desperate to hear something good. Otherwise we judge what will and will not be reviewed almost solely on the title and the cover art or something that stands out in the packaging. ALL press materials that come with a release are immediately discarded. We could care less – save the trees and keep our waste bins free of all the self-indulgant blabbity blab. The bigger the press kit the more likely we are annoyed and bothered by the whole concept. If you've got anything important to say about your music, include it in the packaging, otherwise, it's probably not necessary for us to know it in order to "judge" it. I mean, if it's not necessary for the regular music consumer to know in order to enjoy or not enjoy, we're no less compitent. And if you send us a promo CD without cover art and we don't like it, it never has the chance to be sold back to the record store to be purchased by someone who can't afford the full price CD who may just possibly be your new biggest fan. No, instead it just ends up in the Jack-in-the-Box trash bin where only a dumpster diver may dig it out. But I hear even they prefer CDs with cover art these days. –ed.

I WAS GOING TO KILL MYSELF
THIS AFTERNOON BUT NOW
I THINK I'LL START A BAND!

THE VO5 *self-titled* – Fanfuckingtastic. WORLD INFERNO FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY *The True Story Of The Bridgewater Astral League* – Omhctas

Zines About Comics

by Ryan Bigge



OK, so I fly down to Los Angeles to intern at *Ben is Dead* for two weeks only to discover that it's not the Celebrity Issue I'm working on (that's the next one), but the Comics Issue. Yikes. Though my days of geekdom are barely behind me, comics were never something I got into. But with some fast talking and some surreptitious cram sessions, I managed to acquaint myself with the world of independent, alternative, and (especially) adult comics. Listed below are some excellent resources for newcomers interested in comics as well as those already initiated into this seamy world. Without further ado, in descending order of enjoyment value, are magazines about comic books.

The Comics Journal ($5.95, 7563 Lake City Way, N.E. Seattle, WA, 98115 Published monthly by those crazy cats at Fantagraphics Books) Incredibly fucking excellent mag. Some of the longest interviews I've ever seen in either a mainstream or an alternative publication. Packed full of what's hot and new with a heavy but not overbearing emphasis on independent comics. Highly recommended.

Indy Magazine ($2.95 611 NW 34th Drive, Gainesville, Fl, 32607-2429 Published six times a year) Another really good magazine about independent artists and comics. The interviews are not as long as the *Comics Journal*, which may appeal to those more casually interested in the comic world, and the reviews section was very thorough. Both *Indy Magazine* and the *Comics Journal* feature artists from outside of North America in each issue, providing a nice breadth to both publications.

The Staros Report ($4.95, Chris Staros, POB 1282, Marietta, GA 30061-1282 Yearly Guide) A State of the Union Address on "alternative comics." His list of the 121 most important comics of 1996 is worth the price of admission alone. One can only hope the 1997 edition remains as consistent, well written and well researched. The type of material he casts light upon made me excited and interested enough to march down to a comic store and check out at least half of the 121 artists and comics he recommends. The *Love and Rockets* character index (there's over 250 of them) is also a neat addition. Full of contact info for publishers, distributors, writers, and artists. [note: the '97 edition is now out!]

Juxtapoz ($3.95, POB 884570, San Francisco, CA, 94188-4570) Less focused on comics, more interested in "art." (Have I made enemies of out every comic fan with that sentence?) Lots of pictures (full color – unlike *Indy* and the *Comics Journal*) of cars, Rat Fink and other acrylic paintings, and weird, sci-fi inspired drawings. One of the easier magazines to find in bookstores.

Stripburger - (Stripburger, Forum Ljubljana, Kersnikova 4, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenija) Some cartoons in English, all black and white, well drawn. E-mail them at core@kud-fp.si to find out what they'll charge ya. Some issues have translations for the (mostly) non-English comics. Neat. A place where Serbian Croatian, Slovene, Bosnian, Italian, Dutch, Brazilian, French, American, Danish and Belgian comics meet. Some disturbing images and unique drawing styles make it very engaging.

Bagal Comic Connection ($4.75, Hubris Press, POB 5383, Irvine, CA, 92616-5383) Published twice yearly. The title stands for bisexual and Gay and lesbian and attempts to promote comics, books, strips and animation in this vein. Good articles, reviews and interviews with those making it happen.

Don't Shoot It's Only Comics ($3.00, Jef Taylor, 140a Harvard Ave #308, Allston, MA, 02134) Black and white and rough in places, this is a refreshing change from the more slick and polished work featured by *The Comics Journal*. Much of the comics featured are simple line drawings, often with no words – which appealed less to philistines like myself. A listing in the index allows you to order more work of your favorite artist directly, which is good for artist and fanboy or fangirl alike. Closer to the "I don't get it, it must be art" school of comics but there's some really great work in here and if they maintain the quality, a zine to watch out for.

I Like Comics #1 (1993, $5.00, "Attention Pat" 6515 19th Ave. NW, Seattle, WA, 98117) Put together by Peter Bagge and Helena G. Harvilicz, it focuses on Seattle comic artists who deserve their due.

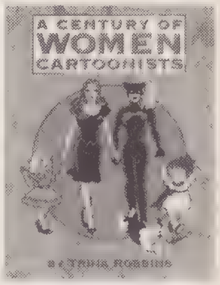
Comic Buyer's Guide (Most newsstands, Circulation Dept. 700 East State Street, Iola, WI 54990-0001) $2.95 on newsstands. Hey! Nerd! Make sure you've got the industry's broadsheet. Published weekly, with ads for acid-free corrugated boxes if you understand what I'm saying. Classifieds, lots of ads for hard to get comics, and debates on the relative merits of Mylar D vs. polyethylene bags.

A few other titles we've have heard good things about – or received at press time – are: **Poopsheet**, (Rick Bradford, POB 161095, Ft. Worth, TX 76161-1095); **Destroy All Comics** (by Jeff LeVine, $1, 2415 Lawton St. San Francisco, CA 94122); **Cartoonist and Comic Artist Magazine** (formerly *The Aspiring Cartoonist*) ($4.95, 905 W. 7th St. #293, Fredrick, MD, 21701); annd finally, a book that may be worthwhile to comic self-publishers the well-titled **How to Publish Your Own Comic Book**, by Tony C. Caputo (Watson-Guptill Publications, NY).

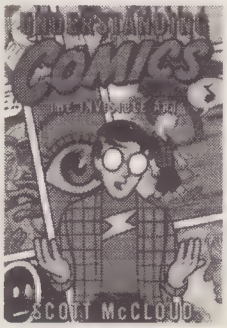
A final note of warning. Just as with any other independent publication (*BID* included) random acts of God and misfortune can often delay issues or cause their untimely death. Try not to cry if the worst happens to one of these fine magazines. You may want to send ahead for a catalog to make sure of mail-order pricing, etc...

comic relief recommends

GIRL COMIX:


A CENTURY OF WOMEN CARTOONISTS
BY TRINA ROBBINS

Action Girl every issue an anthology of female cartoonists, compiled by Sarah Dyer
Twisted Sisters anthology 2 volumes
Hothead Paisan by Diane diMassa
A Century of Women Cartoonists
The Great Women Superheroes by Trina Robbins
Bitchy Bitch by Roberta Gregory



COMIC SELF-HELP BOOKS:
Comics & Sequential Art by Will Eisner
Understanding Comics by Scott McCloud

Today's comic fan is a savvy independent trader, buying hundreds of pre-bagged first issues that he will never open. –Dan Clowes

COMICS ARE PEOPLE TOO

Artbabe Vol 2, # 1 The first issue of *Artbabe* to be published by Fantagraphics, and it's a bit different from past issues. For starters, instead of a bunch of vignettes, you get one longer (24 page) story. "As I Live and Breathe" is about dating and doubting and crushes and uncertainty. So sweet, it almost made me cry. It's that twenty-something generation of confusion -- smart, attractive slackers (not technically, I guess, since they have jobs) who just can't figure out romance, at work, at home, and at bars. Full of mundane details and great dialogue: getting dressed for a first date, interiors of bars, walking around the city streets. At one point, the heroine of the story, Darcy, who's just been on an unsuccessful date with her crush, is cruising around the expressway with her roommate, getting all introspective. "I love this record" she says, "It makes me ache. It feels like the future." What a strange and perfect thing to say. (by Jessica Abel, Fantagraphics) [lisa]

Beer and Roaming in Las Vegas: The Elvis Masters This comic attempts to compare itself with the work of Hunter S. Thompson.. yeah right. By the way Elvis still sucks, especially as a bad comic vehicle. [In a whiny voice] Why do I always get the Elvis crap? (by F. Andrew Taylor, Slave Labor Graphics) [jack]

Dam #1 There is a very fine line between parody and stereotype *Dam*'s socio-political messages are certainly noble enough, but fall short of revolutionary. It seems that lots of artists are spoofing the Sunday Funnies, and out of all I've seen, these were the best. Also the gay Superman (Zuperman) and child-swallowing Barney (Carni) were pretty funny... alright, alright, I'll admit that I laughed. (by Alex Chapunoff, $2.95, POB 370426, 24 pgs, full color) [lorraine]

Dirty Plotte #11 The first thing I thought when I got my hands on this was that it was too thin. Perhaps after waiting so long it distorted my perception. And maybe waiting so long made me think it should have been better too. But Julie's art is always superb, her life story, though sometimes tedious, is always interesting none-the-less. (by Julie Doucet, Drawn &Quarterly, B&W) [darby]

Drawn and Quarterly: A picture storybook Vol 2, #6 This book features work by Jason Lutes, Maurice Vellekoop, and Max. Gripping stories about an Algerian boxer by Baru and a story set during the Spanish Civil War by Miguel Gallardo. My favorite is "Monsieur Jean" by Dupuy & Berberian Beautifully illustrated, it reminds me of Tin-Tin, with Jean departing to Lisbon for a book signing only to find himself caught up in a myriad of adventures. A good opportunity to find some translated European comics and a refreshing change from North American sensibilities (Drawn & Quarterly, $9.95, 64 pgs, color) [ryan]

Fireball No words, but I think there's a plot; I couldn't tell you exactly what said plot might be because I'm much too distracted by the pictures. Great scratchboard angels and devils, smudges boundaries between heaven and hell, confuses preconceived distinctions between evil and just, obliterates concept of fast vs. slow -- whirlwind, vortex. (by Brian Ralph, POB 2328, Providence, RI 02906) [lorraine]

Gordan Yamamoto and The King of the Geeks #1 Weird dreams focusing on the nasal cavity of a Mr. Gordan Yamamoto, along with nerd taunting and a happy ending all figure into this mostly heartwarming tale. A simple and odd combination of dumb bullies and tiny aliens coupled with a stern reminder of why high school sucked. It flew by all too quickly, and I'd be interested in reading the next issue. (by Gene Yang, Humble Comics, $2.95, 32 pgs, B&W) [ryan]

Hot Mexican Love Comics #1 The title alone told me that I would love this comic, after all, what more is there to life? (Except maybe hot Central American love.) Because of some printing error, the first 26 pages are printed backwards, and the green card (how clever) placed in the comic to alert the reader to this error is placed at page 26 with a "start here" note. I didn't notice it however, until I was *at* page 26, and already thoroughly confused. Had it been at page one where I would have seen it right away, it would have saved me, (and I'm sure a lot of other muchachos) from all that unnecessary confusion. Besides that, it was filled with funny Mex-themed comics, by various artists. Hot Mexican Love *is* really all that matters. (542 S. Los Robles, Pasadena, CA 91101, $3.95, 62 pgs, B&W) [estefany]

Humongous Man #1 Nope. Hope that answers your first question. *HM* is a ridiculously musculatured superhero, probably eight feet tall, who bears a striking resemblance to The Tick. After a slow start, things get rolling in the city of Perfopolis, a Greek looking metropolis with all the modern comforts of TV and crime. Has a future-gone-wrong look and feel. News anchors in Egyptian garb and citizens in togas go unexplained. Bursts of humor punctuate the narration. A fake historical excerpt about Perfopolis is a nice touch. Has some good elements, but hasn't quite found a comfortable groove yet. (by Jim Harrison and Dan Stepp, Alternative Press, $2.25, 32 pgs, B&W) [ryan]

I Was (Still)) Seven in '75 Ellen has a knack for taking you back, with a smart rhythm and clean simple artwork that is so fun you can't help but laugh out loud while reading. Her interpretations of her family are so entertaining, I could kick myself for not taking her up on the offer of a late night jacuzzi party at her mom's house. And the "I'm Okay, You're Okay" t-shirts, do you have any of those left? (by Ellen Forney, $7, POB 23368, Seattle, WA 98102) [darby]

Murder Can Be Fun #6 Mr. Marr's fanzine (a la *Answer Me*) becomes a comic book, this issue dripping with human blood coming from the mouths of zoo animals while zoo keepers give golden showers to caged quadrupeds. If you're sick, this won't make you well, but it might make you feel better. (by John Marr, Slave Labor Graphics, $2.95) [jack]

Nowhere #3 Wacky reds and greens (sorry, no 3-D glasses included) overwhelmed me at first glance. Engaging tale of moving, meeting new friends and falling in love all over the place as seen through the eyes of eighth grader Lily. Nothing groundbreaking, but the characters and dialogue of these 12-15 year adolescents is genuine and humorous. Has a "less is more" feel that I quite enjoy. Appeals to sensitive XY's like myself, so I can only assume it could be a hit with the *Sassy* set and beyond. (by Debbie Drechsler, $3.75, Drawn & Quarterly, 24 pages, some color) [ryan]

PIE #1 "A cryptic pilgrimage to the nucleus of joy" reads the cover. Even better, the pilgrimage rhymes! The artwork is pretty amazing, inspired by psychedelica and bad acid. I'm less excited about the rhyming couplets under each illustration, but they're secondary to the eye candy scattered everywhere. A visual tour de force. I couldn't dream up anything this twisted, let alone figure out a way to commit it to pen and paper. Something to flash around proudly the next time someone throws out the line, "Alternative to what?" (by Steven Cerio, Wow Cool, $2.95, 24 pgs, B&W) [ryan]

Polvo Hippie/Grunge/Stoner comix with titles like, "I'm a Junkie" and "Six Pax." The only thing going for it is the Spanish name, (maning "powder" or "dust") although sadly enough, the comic itself is in English. If you like this one, you'll love *Soup*, because it's exactly the same comics with a different cover stapled on. (POB 1342, Calexico, CA 92231) [estefany]

Scattered. #29 Spirits, demons, midpoints, lust, Six Degrees of Separation quotes, Genesis, Steve Allen, Lucifer, Plinth, Jesus and Mary Chain quotes, Mara, and a council. Science fiction, fantasy role-playing, good, bad, right, wrong, light, dark. "Since she's come into my life I've been questioning everything I ever thought." "So what does that have to do with me?" "You threw away what you were and became a monster, not a leader." (by Jason Dube, $2.50, 32 pgs, B&W) [ryan]

Secret Killers #1 Adventures of strong guy John Rah who goes in search of lost African gold mines. Hardly groundbreaking. I find the writing pretty lame and clichéd. Its GI-Joe feel appeals to little boys or men who never quite grew up. Artwork isn't compelling either. This comic should have remained a secret. (by Dan Braum and Jerry Williams, Bronze Man Comics, $2.95, 24 pgs, B&W) [ryan]

Sky Ape #1 A smart, millionaire gorilla who fights crime! Intentionally cheesy in parts, and self-reverentially humorous in others. Don't be fooled by the seemingly serious cover. Pop culture is bandied about, plenty of non-sequiturs too. The action jumps about at a smart pace. Fans of Evan Dorkin won't be disappointed by this comic. Oh yeah, the letters page is a hoot. (by Amara McCarney and Richard Jenkins, Slave Labor Graphics, $2.95, 24 pgs, B&W) [ryan]

Slacker Comics #12 Slave Labor does some good titles (i.e. *Milk and Cheese*, *MCBF*, etc.), so what happened here? Turn off that goddamned MTV! (by Doug Slack, Slave Labor Graphics, $2.95) [jack]

Smell of Steve #1 This comic made me piss my pants laughing… oh, did I write that or was I just thinking it? A man with an eye patch, top hat, hook for a hand and a cigar tramples a city; his name: Phil Collins. A bridegroom shits in a box for a bizarre wedding ceremony. Just what is in that cigar you're smoking? (POB 20427, Seattle, WA 98102, $2.95) [jack]

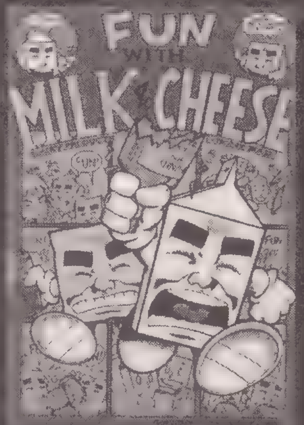
Underwater #11 Everybody talks in a weird accent in the world of Underwater. E.g.: "Lafa went to find a joeb." or "You fucheer!" I really wish I had read the first few issues so I knew what in the hell was going on. The second half of the comic is an illustrated take on Matthew 20:1-20:29. Nothing in here really excited me much. It's cryptic and oblique, without anything compelling enough to warrant reading another issue. (by Chester Brown, Drawn & Quarterly, $3.25, 24 pgs, B&W) [ryan]

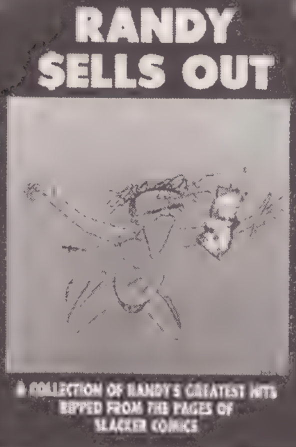
NO SHIT!

AT least we like to think so. For eleven years Slave Labor Graphics has been bringing you some of the coolest comics around, and we've done it by putting as little shit as possible under our label. Call for our free catalog and discover the best kept secret in the comic book industry.

Johnny the Homicidal Maniac • Created, Written & Illustrated by the one and lonely Jhonen Vasquez. Remember that name because soon you will kneeling before Jhonen and thanking him for bestowing you with the miserable wonder that is Johnny, a person who is not dealing well with the collapse of his reality. This comic has it all: a blood drinking wall, cavernous basement torture rooms and Johnny's own little comic HAPPY NOODLE BOY! All individual issues of Johnny are in print and waiting for you to invite them into your tortured lives.
Johnny the Homicidal Maniac #1-7 - $2.95 each
JTHM: The Director's Cut (collects the first seven issues) - $19.95
JTHM: The Director's Cut limited HARDCOVER - $29.95

Milk & Cheese • Created, written & Illustrated by Evan Dorkin. Lock your doors and hide the liquor because Milk & Cheese are rampaging across America on a mission to kick your ass. Follow the adventures of these dairy products gone bad as they trash the American pop culture landscape. Created by three-time Eisner Award winner Evan Dorkin, Milk & Cheese are but the tip of his creative genius. You will also find Dork, Hectic Planet, Kid Blastoff, and a host of other wildly funny and creative things in our catalog.
Fun with Milk & Cheese
(collects the first four issues of Milk & Cheese) - $11.95
Milk & Cheese #1-6 - $2.75 each
Milk & Cheese #7 - $2.95




RANDY SELLS OUT
A COLLECTION OF RANDY'S GREATEST HITS RIPPED FROM THE PAGES OF SLACKER COMICS

Slacker Comics • Created, written & Illustrated by Doug Slack. Oh sure, just what the world needs, another book about the lost and depressed Generation X. Well, this isn't what you think. Slacker is a comic created by Doug Slack (hence the name) and features Doug's own view of society as experienced by Randy: the angry little grunge puppy/angry little goth guy/victim of nipple piercing gone bad (really, you gotta reads this). Find out why the Staros Report says "Randy is a riot!"
Randy Sell$ Out
(collects the Randy stories from issues #1-4) - $11.95
Slacker #7-up
(many issues are out of print, call for up-to-date stock information) - $2.95 each

ORDERING INFORMATION

To order using a credit card call us at 1-800-866-8929 (outside the US call 408 971-8929). Postage and handling is extra. Call the number above for a free mail order catalog, there are t-shirts and comics galore within its pages.

Slave Labor Graphics. Celebrating 11 years of happy, happy comics!

you can!?!
judge a book by its cover

During a rainy (or was it sunny?) winter (or was it spring?) day, three svelte and saucy ladies (that's questionable) sat back with a pile of books and magazines and decided, from looking at the product as if they'd seen it on the newstand or bookshelves, whether or not they might pick it up, read it, perhaps even splurge. Here's some'a the things they had to say (and say and say). Another in a long line of Ben projects made to hurt...

Lisa Anne Auerbach: This is a new fiction company from Los Angeles "that's leaning towards bold, in-your-face brilliant and sometimes shocking work." It looks like they're doing it for people with eyesight problems.

Darby: That's bold and shocking

AA: Very bold – it's the large-type edition.

D: If you put type in boldface, then it's automatically bold.

AA: Oh Jesus, this is bad. Poetry. Want a sample? This is a poem called *Dead Fruit*: "Love is like an apricot ready to fall from the tree to knock you out. You pick it up and cautiously take a bite. You are both sickened an intrigued by the taste, you bite again."

D: We're speechless.

AA: That book is called ***Hillbilly Psycho: A View from Within*** It's by Tracy Lee Williams. Published by Goddess Dead publications.

D: What does that mean?

AA: This is their publishing company. Frank wrote us a nice letter.

D: Hi Frank! That's my dad's name.

AA: He also sent a copy of ***Damaged Goods*** magazine (POB 46277, Los Angeles, CA 90046, $2.75), which he calls a "*New Yorker* for the '90s meets *Bikini* magazine, a literary magazine for those culture-starved Gen X'ers."

D: Eek! How many things can you mention in one description that would make you not want to read something?

AA: This is really unbelievable.

D: The cover isn't bad. I might read this judging only by the cover They have a Health and Fitness ad on the first page. Can we judge a book by the cover by looking at one of the inside pages?

AA: Yeah, sure. There're no rules.

D: If you go to a health and fitness in Beverly Hills and you say, "Damaged Goods," you'll get two weeks free. I'll tell you that, and you don't even have to read this magazine.

AA: This is depressing. I didn't say anything about *Hillbilly Psycho's* cover, which features a woman in a petite dress, looking sad and wearing clown makeup, hanging out on a porch Darby, your turn.

D: It is really kind of disturbing. Lorraine?

Lorraine: I'm all for clown makeup.

AA: We don't have to look at that again.

D: We have ***Yak'uz'a*** (POB 26039, Wilmington, DE 19899-6039, $4.50). Should we review *Yakuza*, or should we...

AA: You've already been reading it for like fifty years already.

D: Well, I had to make sure that they weren't putting any ugly things in there. They reviewed the zine tour. Yeah, I would buy this zine 'cause it says, "Darby *Ben is Dead*, one woman zine freak."

Lo: In bright yellow on the cover.

D: And then, "Killzinesters tour: Six losers in an RV."

Lo: Is he calling me a loser? Hey Dave, it takes one to know one.

D: And um, it's this really pretty, what do you call it when you get your photos done in...

Lo: Sepia tone.

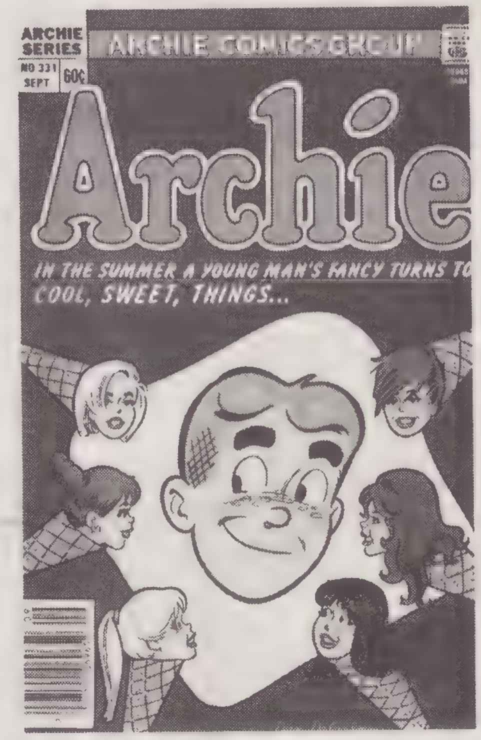
D: It's all colored in, like an old photo, very nice and lovely. Has a bar-code so it's not a zine, it's a touring magazine, about all these tours. I think it's pretty and thick, and even though some of the pages are repeated a bunch of times, I don't have a problem with that.

Lo: It proclaims Mudhoney in yellow letters too.

D: Would you read that in my bathroom?

AA: In your bathroom I might read that. "Inspired by punk rock and travel since 1992." I like that. I don't care much for the cover, I must say, 'cause I thought there were cows there, but they're just negative space.

D: Lisa has a problem with negative space, when it could have been cows.


ARCHIE SERIES
NO 331
SEPT
60¢
ARCHIE COMICS GROUP
Archie
IN THE SUMMER A YOUNG MAN'S FANCY TURNS TO COOL, SWEET, THINGS...

AA: How about this one? ***Moo Juice*** (POB 1169, Chicago, IL 60611-0619, $3). Looks expensive, they spent money on color Xeroxing.

D: Color Xeroxing is very expensive, so you know they have to have a job at a Xerox place, because what idiot would get an 11x17 color cover?

AA: And a free button.

D: So they've got a scam going, and that's always a positive thing for zine people.

Lo: Hello? Who's looking inside the magazine here? I thought we were judging by the cover...

D: We're allowed to look, as long as you don't read it.

AA: I just want to look in the table of contents. Now I'm getting stuck in the contributors page

Lo: So this one is for stuffed animal aficionados.

D: It doesn't quite explain what we will get inside, and *Moo Juice*, you'd think...

Lo: But there's lots of stuffed monkeys, not cows.

AA. There's definitely a Mike Kelley rip-off on the back page.

Lo: Mike Kelley meets Andy Warhol. But ripping off is a very post-modern ideal; as post-modernists, I'm sure Mike and Andy would both be O.K. with it.

AA: I'm sure they'd be flattered. Any sort of publicity you can get, they'd be happy for. And it comes with anti-space aliens stickers. I would read this on the john.

D: O.K., ***59 cents*** (POB 19806, Seattle, WA 98109, $1). Um, I don't like the cover, but then I still might read it anyway. I'm boring that way

AA: It looks like it's trying to be very much a zine. It's black and white, it has a picture of a member of Kiss on it, it says *59 cents* in big letters, although down at the bottom it says, "one dollar." Some conflicting information on the cover.

Lo: Let's do ***Dragazine*** (POB 461795, West Hollywood, CA 90046, $5.95). It's good because it's pink, and it has the lovely, talented, Ms. Vaginal Cream Davis decked out in all her sparkley splendor The back cover has pretty frames, and funny pictures in them. And it has very, very glamorous glossy ladies inside

D: I think that, well, they did something wrong in the process Sometimes it's hard to get black people to look right if you haven't done it before, and in this case, Vag looks a little grainy, and almost kind of, it comes out kind of washy, digitized or something, I don't know what's going on here. Um, I would say that they used the wrong film or something, like they needed a bigger negative, so that the picture wouldn't look so grainy when they blew it up.

Lo: I don't know, I think it looks cute; sometimes grain equals ultraglam, and that's what they're going for.

D: I don't know if that's what they're going for, but I would like to see Vag really crisp. The whole thing just looks a little too mushy. I'd like her to stand out, you know what I'm saying?

AA: There's a pink press release inside, take that out. There, it looks better now

D: I saw it on the newsstand actually, but the thing about this is, that it's the best nail polish job that I have ever seen. See those hands? They're like a tiger

AA: It says on the cover that it's a magazine for "Halloweeners and Inbetweeners," so I don't think I'd read it, because I'm neither. I like magazines that are targeted to me.

D: Well I like *Dragazine*, even if just for the pretty pictures. So... ***Might*** (77 Federal St. 2nd floor, San Francisco, CA 94107, $3.95 –since defunct) is not right. There's something definitely wrong about this magazine. I've been saying this for awhile now, well since the first issue, but, um...

AA: Can you read us the cover and tell us what you're commenting about? Maybe describe the cover a little bit?

D: No problem. First of all, you learn a lot from this cover, this cover which says, "Are Black People Cooler Than White People," with one black guy eyeing this white guy, who's eyeing him back.

Lo: And there's a boring white background and boring black lettering.

D: And boring guys, neither of whom are cool.

Lo: A waste of a cover.

D: And, the only thing this really tells you is that this magazine is made by a bunch of white people who are not cool.

AA: It screams it.

D: It says, "Issues, Intrigue, Immortality," and I don't think I'm going to find any of that inside. I just don't trust them. I don't know, these are people that were journalism majors in school, but just don't have much soul.

AA: I think I would pick up this magazine and read it, because I'm wondering if black people really are cooler than white people. Maybe it can explain, but then I open it up and I see a picture of a really ugly, fat, white guy, and then I see an article called "Pornography and Me." And then some sort of crazy... oh, that's an ad. I'd have to say they probably *are* cooler, considering the white guys they've got

D: Are there mostly white guys in there?

AA: I don't know, Bill Clinton is definitely a white guy. The advertising base is white. The advertisers are white people.

D: If this magazine is on the white side, then I would definitely have to go for the other team.

AA: Nice photo. Lorraine, your turn. What do you think, are black people cooler than white people, and do you want to read about it in a white magazine?

Lo: I wouldn't pick this up, but I'm not very cool.

D: It's embarrassing to have.

AA: It *is* embarrassing. Do you have a trash can?

D: This gets the gong. O.K., ***Lollipop*** (POB 441493, Somerville, MA 02144, $3). *Lollipop* always looks the same to me. It always looks really ugly. I think that their logo just sucks, or something. I don't know what it is.

Lo: Their color schemes are bad.

D: Is that it? It's not like the artwork is all that bad, it's just that it always looks ugly. I would pick it up only because I know that it's a really well written magazine, but the covers always leave a lot to be desired and it looks like the same magazine each month. I get confused.

AA: It looks like another music zine. It has Morphine on here in big letters, and I just threw my Morphine T-shirt away last week because I think they suck, so I wouldn't read this magazine, or any magazine that put Morphine on the cover in big letters. It goes in the trash

D: ***The Mojo Action Companion Unit*** (Exclaim! Brand Comics, 7-B Pleasant Blvd. #966, Toronto, Ontario M4T1K2 Canada, $2.75) is a comic book with a super-dooper cover.

Lo: It has a guy with a Monkees shag haircut and stripey bellbottoms, and glasses. I'm a sucker for a guy in glasses.

D: And little bits of clip art in there, but most of it's drawn. It's really nicely done. I don't know about the type on the top, but the drawing is lovely. I would review this. I would actually, yeah, I'd put this in my bathroom. Is that the standard, if we'd put it in the bathroom?

AA: Apparently.

Lo: If it goes in the *Ben is Dead* zine rack above the toilet.

AA: Yeah, this looks good. I'd even read this. Its got a picture of the guy who wrote it looking really lame on the cover with an arrow towards his unshaven face which says, "the artist."

Lo: I was thinking he was cute.

AA: I'm a sucker for self-deprecation, Lorraine's a sucker for guys with glasses, he is Mr. Right. By the way, where is ***Whore*** magazine? Remember? The one that stole my heart away?

D: Oh, *Whore*. The one you wrote a fan letter to, claiming your undying love, and they never wrote us back? It's just so depressing.

AA: Maybe there's a letter today. I've been sitting by the mailbox.

D: For a year, it's been a *year*, Lisa! This is another one of those magazines that are spawned from a radio station, a school radio station probably, ***KDViationS*** (UC Davis,14 Lower Freeborn, Davis, CA 95616). KDVS 90.3. It's free. One of those, you know, with a million interviews, and their program schedule. These radio station zines have a knack for having the ugliest covers ever – that's how you know that they are radio station magazines. That's the rule. Then in it, there's always more than you would ever want to look through, and actually, the type on this, is smaller than in *Ben is Dead*, so I don't know. I thought we set limits, and people are just going beyond them. There's too much 7 point type for me to even care.

Lo: I think you've said it all about that magazine.

D: I might look at the top ten list.

AA: This zine looks really crafty. Super crafty. It's called ***Buffalo Speedway*** (3477 N. Broadway Ave. Box #112, Chicago, IL 60657, $2). The woman who sent it enjoyed hearing you speak on the New York City panel.

D: Thank you.

AA: It's really sort of sweet. It has all sorts of hidden envelopes and posters that are hand colored with crayon, and a little comic book that's like something you would get at a Christian thing.

D: Chic tract.

AA: It's unbelievably crafty, and I don't even want to read it because it's so hand wrought.

D: If you take it apart you might not be able to put it back together again.

AA: But maybe I would like to read it a little bit. I don't think I want to put it in the bathroom because I'm afraid that some of it would fall in the toilet. There's too many pieces. It's more of a desk or a kitchen magazine.

Lo: And it comes with a fold-out hand crayoned faux zodiac poster. Instead of Capricorn and stuff it has a dollar bill, some cheese, an ice cream cone, a handgun, a match, a skull, a hamhock, and there's some winged creatures in the center.

AA: It looks really nice. Oh, it's got a review of the *Music to Control the Weak*. They spelled weird wrong.

Lo: ***Idiom Savant*** (Henry Holt) is a book, "Slang as it is Slung, the Colorful Lingo, American Subcultures from Animators to Zine readers." Immediately upon receiving this book in the mail, I flipped to the zine readers section, 'cause you know...

D: Yeah, we know.

Lo: Page 269, it lists definitions. It's basically like a pretend dictionary. Well, it's a real dictionary for things that aren't in the dictionary, like anti-copyright, DIY, Editrix, Fanboy, Fanzine, Fortien, Furies, Gemstone file, Goth, HC, Homocore, Indie, Jack Chic, Magalock, Male art, MIB, One Shot, Per Zine, Riot grrrl, SF/F/H/M, Shitworkers, SXE and Techno. That's it for the zine readers section.

D: When I get a book like this, I go immediately to the back inside cover to see what the guy looks like. This guy's a total nerd. I realized recently that I'm a complete snob, I *do* look to see what's cool and what's not because I have to make sure that I'm cool, and since I judge a book by its cover, when I look at this guy, I say he ain't cool. Considering the list of acknowledgments, he asked like a million, million people... He probably didn't know any words from this book. He got them all from this long list of people that are included in the acknowledgments, which is almost as big as the whole book. The way this book is set up you can't find anything. If you're looking for some slang on prison inmates, you have to go to the prison index section, and there's no index, which is silly. If you're trying to find out what a word means, you're going to have to be looking through this whole book, unless you're sure that it has something to do with prison inmates or zines, or whatever. I don't believe in these books anyway because I think that they just make it up as they go along – like somebody says, "hey, do you have any good slang?" and they just make up shit, don't you?

AA: I like slang dictionaries. Oh, but hmmm. I wonder if they have skiers... skydivers...

Lo: You know those skiers, they talk so hip.

AA: Oh, they do, page 187.

Lo: Throw down some funky skier jive.

D: Tell us what we've learned.

AA: This is not right.

D: See! Everyone likes a good slang book, but ..

AA: I mean some of it, I mean duh.

Lo: Duh *plus* duh.

AA: Like "corn snow." That's not really slang.

D: What is corn snow?

AA: It's just like spring snow. This is weird

D: What is that snow, the pee snow?

Lo: Maybe we do need this dictionary.

D: What is the pee snow?

AA: What?

D: The saying for yellow snow.

Lo: Don't eat it

AA: A "lang bang" is a sore shin caused by ski boots.

Lo: We're moving on, Lisa.

AA: This is totally queer. O.K., what about this book, ***100 Male Nudes*** (Taschen)? It's very small.

Lo: Well, judging by the cover, I'd guess it's about male nudes.

AA: It's about 4x3 inches... I'm embarrassed looking at it.

D: It's really cool: nice pink cover, and why does he have a chicken in his lap?

AA: Is that a chicken?

Lo: No.

D: Whatever that is. What is that?

Lo: It looks like elephantitis of the...

D: Is this thing for real? It looks like the man on the cover is part man, part elephant man. I don't understand. I'm confused, so that means out of curiosity I might open it up and read it.

Lo: We start with some Tom of Finland artwork.

D: Yeah, this is a little gay man pocket, little pocket...

AA: Pocket guide to fags

D: Yeah, and there's some spread legs here.

AA: Well let's see.

D: There's some anuses

AA: No way.

Lo: Tons of them.

D: And young little boys and sailors. We've got some tied up things. I would say they usually do a really good job. I like their little books. I wish I could make some cute little books.

AA: O.K., I'm going to dig in and I'm not going to look. I picked out ***The Retail Adventures of Kalli and Rex***. "Warner Brothers Records Presents..." I don't know, it just seems so...

Lo: Sterile.

AA: Corporate, and you know we don't like corporate. But maybe it's funny, and maybe it's good, and it's black and white on the cover, and it looks all right, and I'm not even going to open it.

Lo: It obviously doesn't cater to me because it just has pictures of guys, cartoons of guys on the cover, and not even cute guys.

D: I don't understand, what is it?

AA: It says it is a monthly comic strip, and now this is the collection of the monthly episodes of this comic strip. Seven years worth of this comic strip, from Pennsylvania.

D: Why is it presented by Warner Brothers/Reprise Records?

AA: Because a lot of it has to do with the record industry. Oooh. All right, let's go on. This book looks scary.

Lo: ***The Book of Lazarus*** (Fiction Collective Two). It has a nice red, white and blue striped spine, but the front and back covers are black and gray, which are boring. I like bright colors to grab my waning attention span.

AA: Look at those stripes on the side of the book, what do you call it, the pages of the book are striped, so some of them are dark pages on the edges and some of them are light pages?

Lo: Gilded edges, but it's not gilded, it's gray stripes.

AA: That makes me curious.

D: It's arty. I don't know, I read the back flap and I wanted to read it, but I've been getting a flux of serial killer books lately, and the problem is that a lot of them are really well-written and interesting, but I'm just so bored with the whole topic that it's kind of made me put them aside.

AA: Is that a serial killer book? I'm going to give it a second look.

Lo: Lisa's not bored with serial killing yet.

D: He did the *Alphabet Murders*.

AA: I like serial killers, but I can't really take a book seriously that has all these black pages with nothing on them. It's all in crazy type styles. It seems too difficult. Maybe it's good.

D: It looks like it might be good.

Lo: Here's another serial killer book called ***Killer Fiction*** (Feral House). It has some nice art on the cover, some women being hung in a row with their heads covered and they're in their underwear, and there's some handwriting and some knives, so yeah, I'd flip through it, because I'm not completely bored with murdering yet, and the cover's actually pretty, and it has some nice gold and red warm tones, so I feel all warm and bubbly inside.

D: What is this? It's about four killers?

AA: I think it's about a guy who wrote fiction, and they found out through his writing that he was a serial killer.

Lo: I think it's written by a woman.

AA: As told to...

D: "Stories that convicted the ex-cop of murder, G.J. Schaefer as told to Sondra London." Oh, I see, on the back it has all these killers who are commenting on his writing, like John Wayne Gacy.

AA: Do you think that's real? That's not real.

D: "Schaefer's writing is graphic and keeps the reader wanting more. He has done his research, and it reads as if he has tried it all too."

AA: I don't understand how it says his writing is really realistic, but the book is credited not to him, but "as told to," Meaning that G.J. Schaefer didn't really write it, but just told this woman to write it all down.

D: Maybe he's in jail and doesn't have a typewriter.

AA: I don't believe that John Wayne Gacy really reviewed this book. I mean he's been dead for how many years?

D: They have pictures of the writer. This takes more analysis. I hate having my leg pulled.

AA: I'd like to read short stories that convict someone of murder. I like the idea that you can't write everything down.

D: Can we get the other murder books? We have two more murder books. One is the ***Squeaky*** book (Buzz Books). She was one of the Manson family, and tried to shoot Ford. I read a little bit of this book, I cheated, and it's well written, very informative, I would read this book.

Lo: The cover's kind of boring, but other than that...

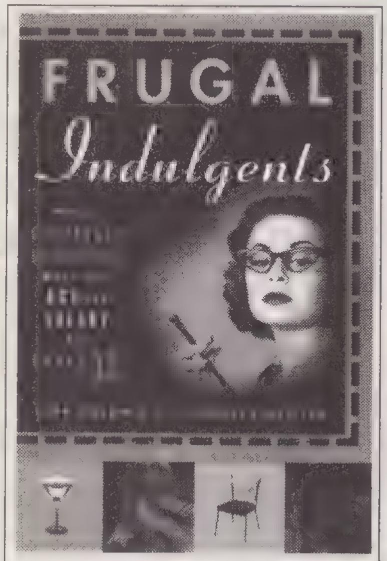
AA: I thought that they had swastikas tattooed on their foreheads.

Lo: No, they carved X's in their forehads, and then in jail, Manson made his into a swastika. The rest of them just have the X's.

AA: There's a very grainy photograph of a woman's face with just a red X on her forehead. It's kind of drab looking. I would like to read it.

Lo: Yeah, but not because of the cover.

AA: No, because I saw her interviewed on TV once, and she was really interesting.



Frugal Indulgents – How to Cultivate Decadence When Your Age and Salary are under 30 by Kera Bolonik and Jennifer Griffin (Owl/Henry Holt)

I was very excited when this book came in the mail, as it was right up my alley. Not only was the cover bedecked with swelligant stock-style retro photos and fonts, but the book was praised by my favorite author, Francesca Lia Block – all this in addition to the fabulous promise in the title. Now don't get me wrong, the writing style is extremely entertaining, and the ironic tone, glossary of "cunning lingo", and quizzes sprinkled throughout are just some of the aspects that make for an enjoyable read, but disapointingly, this book does not keep its promise. Though the aspirations and attitudes are certainly Bouviessent (to use one of their own terms: meaning glamour at all times for all occasions, coined for Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis), the tips fall short in how to acheive this frugally Maybe it's because I'm a seasoned secondhand princess whose means are way, *way* under thirty grand a year (way way way), but suggestions like 'shop at thriftstores sometimes' and 'only buy designer clothes occasionally' just weren't all that revolutionary Maybe if I'd been brought up in the lap of luxury by mommy and daddy in our upper Manhattan apartment and was now out of the nest, fending for myself as a secretary with cosmopolitan yearnings, then these suggestions might ease the adjustment into my new life, but for those of us who truely live at the poverty level, (and doing a damn fine job maintaining glamour, and yes, for all occasions *times ten* thank you – as anyone who knows me can attest to), this book is absolutely no help [lorraine]

D: O.K., the next murder book is ***Lustmord: The Writings and Artifacts of Murderers*** (Bloat). This is from Brian King who used to do Amok, and split off from Amok, and now this is his first Bloat Book. Anyway, the thing that's horrible about this book, I think it's a nice cover, I like it, but the type is so small, it's such a shame. I would really like to read this book, and maybe it's like what some people say about *Ben Is Dead*, but I haven't been able to get into ***Lustmord*** because the writing is just so small. It's harsh. There's lots of little clippings and pictures and and poetry and writings and all that from the murders, and I bet you anything this is a real worthwhile book.

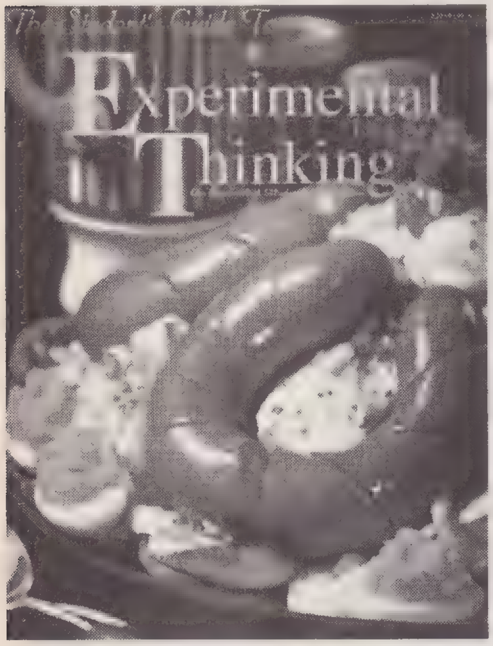
AA: I read some of it, and it was really good, and I didn't have a problem with the type size, but maybe there's a large-print edition in the future. Maybe you should call up Brian King and get the Bloat visually-impaired series going. It is a beautiful cover: it's got a really scary picture of someone's eyes on it. I wish that I had known about more of the murders. I wanted to see more of the murderers before I read the book, 'cause I like reading about friends.

Lo: And here's another serial killer book, called ***Ironic: Alanis Morisette – the Story*** (Quarry Press).

D: That's a good switch

Lo: Judging by that cover, I would run away screaming bloody murder.

AA: There's a picture of Alanis in some leather pants on the cover, with a microphone, holding her other hand up in the air. It looks like she's holding a candy bar in her hand. She's singing, and she looks very jubilant. It says, "It's a black fly in your Chardonnay. It's a death row pardon two minutes too late. Isn't it ironic... Don't you think?"



D: We don't want to hear it. Lorraine just snatched the book away from Lisa so she'd be forced to stop. You know how they have straight to video movies? Well this is a straight to library book.

Lo: Do you think a library would buy that?

D: Yeah, they always have these bio books. These really cheap, sort of goofy bio books. I don't have much of a problem with Alanis Morisette. I don't think she's horrible. She suffers from the fact that she's over-abused, and her songs have been played a thousand times over.

AA: All right Darby, stand up for her. Stand up for Irony! You'd read it, wouldn't you? You'd put it in your bathroom.

Lo: That one she'd put right by her bed.

AA: You'd get the waterproof version for the tub.

D: Oh, how cute! There's these old pictures of her with these big hoop earrings and a little fluffy dog hairdo. I'm sure she's a neat-o gal, but she should have had more of a say in her book.

Lo: I just picked up a magazine called ***Not for Hire*** (5737 Kanan Rd. #288, Agoura Hills, Ca 91301, Free) just because I saw that it said *Redd Kross* on the cover, so even though the cover is just plain black and white and kind of ugly, I am picking it up and looking for the Redd Kross interview.

D: So, Lorraine is out of commission for a few minutes. ***Dreadful Pleasures*** (Mike Accomando 650 Prospect Ave., Fairview, N.J. 07022, $3), this zine is all about old horror B-movies and stuff, and if you like that, that's all there is.

D: ***Indy Magazine*** (611 NW 34th Drive, Gainesville, FL 32607-2429 $2.95) *The Guide to Alternative Comix and Film*. It has Shannon Wheeler art on the cover. They did something goofy, like they fucked up on the printing, or they were trying to use the overlays for the black, and only cut the corners, so there's a sort of badly done version of something that was probably once decent. Shannon Wheeler does some good artwork. His full-color stuff is nice, but this cover didn't come out very well. Anyway, it's the comix issue, so I'm all for it. A lot of different artists are covered in here, and I'm going to steal whatever I can for this issue.

AA: I'm a little turned off by magazines that proclaim themselves as things like, The Guide to Alternative whatever, but I like the cover which is a drawing of a guy at a drawing table, and there's some sort of creature with a head made of coffee standing..

D: It's *Too Much Coffee Man*.

AA: Is that what that is? I don't think I'd look at it. It looks like something my dad would read to try and get a grip on alternative comics and film culture.

D: They need a new logo

AA: Yeah, maybe that's it.

D: ***Tail Spins*** (POB 1860, Evanston, IL 60204, $3). This always reminds me of *Lollipop* for some reason.

AA: I think this magazine looks pretty good, it's from Syracuse, New York, which makes it free in Syracuse, and it's called, ***The Flashing Astonisher*** (113 Fleetwood Ln., Minoa, NY 13116). It's got pictures of babies with skull heads in fetal positions hanging from cobwebs, and then there's a sea anemone on the bottom scooping them all up. It looks really awesome, I would definitely look at this. In fact, I'm going to open it right now. I'm going to be in La La land with Lorraine over there.

D: That shows how much Lisa is influenced by anything that looks like it's heavy metal or speed metal.

AA: What's your sign? Oh, you're a Scorpio, right? Your snore-o-scope is, "shut-up and spank it." Lorraine, Capricorn's is, "call home, buck-o." If your birthday is today, "kill yourself, you're too old."

D: ***Chaos*** (Grind Productions, 575 Jackson Avenue, New Windsor, NY 12553, $1.75) It's a kid with a sharpie making superheroes in class, and having to do them really quickly so no one can see, otherwise he might... I don't think he'd be embarrassed, actually. It's kind of a sloppy thing that I don't know who would be interested in.

AA: That one's awesome, didn't I review it last issue? ***The Palindromist**, A Journal For People Who Write and Read Palindromes* (POB 471258, San Francisco, CA 94147 $3). I think the name says it all.

Lo: Here's a zine called ***Limousine*** (1591 Page St. #303, San Francisco, CA 94117 $2). It has a yellow paper cover with a cute old-style font and some cute glamour girls in striped bathing suits, kind of like the old Barbies. Yeah, I'd read this.

D: ***Uncommon Desires*** (POB 2377, New York, NY 10185, $22). It's already up to issue #25. I can't believe that they haven't been jailed yet. I don't know how they get this magazine out. I'm totally confused.

AA: What's uncommon about the desires, Darby?

Lo: It seems to be child porn.

D: They've been doing this since I've been doing my magazine. There's a P.O. Box and everything. There's nude pictures in there of little girlies.

AA: It's all the same girl, isn't it?

D: I guess they have a featured player. They always have a different girl.

AA: What's the text about?

D: A lot of it is about the legal fight they have with the laws against child pornography.

AA: Would you read this in the bathroom?

D: I do read it. I'm curious

AA: It's got a really glossy cover with a picture of a little girl in a dress on it. It's black and white.

D: And all of a sudden, by page two, she's a nudie.

AA: Wow, fully buck naked. They cut her off right below the knees. That's weird.

Lo: ***Kittums*** (POB 410312, San Francisco, CA 94141, $1). It has feet on it! How gross is that! I would definitely not read anything with feet on the cover

D: All right, ***Bunnyrabbit*** (51 MacDougal Street Box 319, New York, NY 10012, $2). I think I've always wanted to read this, and maybe I have, and maybe I've even reviewed it, but I don't think so. I think I've just heard about it a lot. I'll try it. Anything with bunnies, in ode to ***Bunnyhop*** and Noël. I'll read anything, just for them. It looks cute and little, like they are.

AA: I would totally read it because there's an allusion to Pat the Bunny right on the cover, the little piece of sandpaper pasted on that's supposed to feel like daddy's cheek. There's and article about Martin Kersels, and I love him, so I want to read it right now. I can't find the thing about Martin, though. Oh, here he is, and I'm a sucker for this too: instead of showing his work, which is a photograph, they had one of their artists do a sketch of the photograph, so it's all illustrated with drawings.

Lo: That's a clever way to bunnyhop around the copyright issue. He used the prettiest sun I've ever seen in my life.

D: We've got these heavy metalish comics from Harris Comics who do ***Vampirella***. I didn't know it started in the '50s. We got *Vampirella* too. I think I gave those to you, didn't I, Lisa?

AA: Yeah, but I didn't read them.

D: I've read some of them. They're not that bad. I think the art for *Vampirella* is good, and her nemesis, friend/foe character is really interesting, the dynamics between them and everything. Isn't she drawn by a woman?

Lo: Yes.

D: This one is called ***Cyber Frog*** ($2.95), and I can't even look at it, so I'm done.

Lo: That one's for twelve year old boys. O.K., here's ***Slant*** (1809 Walnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19103. Free.), the Urban Outfitters zine.

AA: No.

Lo: Yes.

AA: That is queer, O.K.

Lo: But you know what, their layouts are really good, and their articles are generally good – one issue they had Al Hoff, Patty Powers and Jocko, and some other zine affiliates write articles.

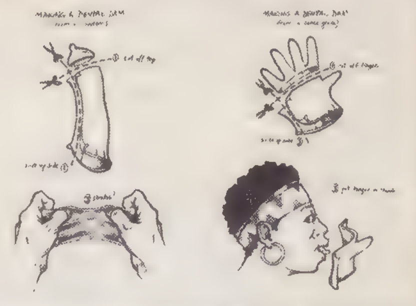
D: They can steal all the writers and artists from regular zines.

Lo: But Urban Outfitters pays them to do it, so it's a good opportunity.

AA: I really like this *Bunnyrabbit* zine, but I don't really think it's worth two dollars.

Lo: I've never actually been able to afford any-

Figure 8:
Making a Dental Dam



The Ultimate Guide To Anal Sex For Women

"I have to admit, I love anal sex" confesses Tristan Taormino author of her brilliant new book. A woman after my own heart. Chicks who dig anal sex rule, and chicks who write about it just completely rock my world. If you've ever fantasized about having a big fat anal plug up your ass, or perhaps a hot, throbbing cock tantalize your buttocks, but were too afraid to do anything about it, then you might want to pick this one up. There's a gaping crater full of info with pictures too. Illustrated by Fish of *Brat Attack* fame, these drawings of girl/girl, boy/girl ass-fucking as easy to understand as *Fun with Dick and Jane*. Lots of personal excerpts from all different sorts of women, sharing lots of dirty anal secrets and I use *dirty* in only the most positive way. Besides getting a big, fat boner from all this, you'll learn stuff too. Important stuff. Stuff they don't teach you in sex ed class. And if you're one of those people that thinks anal sex is only for fags, you're livin' in the dark ages. Don't let the title fool you either. Boys can get a lot out of this book and I don't care if you're straight either. Trust me, chicks dig anal sex, and there's plenty of women I know who wouldn't hesitate to strap it on and give their man the lovin he deserves. And just for the record, I got through a chapter and a half before I had to choke the chicken, so there. (Cleis Press, $14.95) [Nancy] thing at Urban Outfitters.

D: It's really expensive to do a little copy. If they send it to a distributor, all they get is a dollar.

AA: You're right, it's very hard for zine people. Maybe they should all get jobs at Kinko's.

Lo: Or at Urban Outfitters.

AA: Or just write for *Slant*.

D: Yeah, *Slant* has good writing and everything. Why am I in here? "Darby said no, I will never play here."

Lo: Darby Crash.

AA: It's not always all about *you*, Darby.

D: There's another Darby? Why didn't someone tell me? I would have picked a different name.

Lo: The name Sid's not taken.

D: The ***Lil' Rhino Gazette*** (POB 535668, Grand Prairie, TX 75053-5668, $2.50) is not little anymore. Now it's an 8 1/2x11" magazine, and it's all band stuff and comics. It's nice. This one, ***Secret Nicole*** (1425 Laurel St., Santa Cruz, CA 95060 $3), I love this title. I think I've heard people talking about it, but I never quite saw it until now. I would pick it up because it says, "What's inside: Hardcore Nancy Drew." It looks like it's secret agents. It's guns and cameras and silencers, new identities, and a little card with hidden information pasted underneath it.

AA: I like that it's a girl, it's like *Harriet the Spy*. Maybe it's for fans of *Harriet the Spy*.

D: We've got ***Buster*** (POB 46401, LA, CA 90046).

Lo: One staple on the upper left hand corner.

D: Yeah, and it's a teeny eight page magazine with what looks like someone who you can't trust on the cover. Some lady with frizzy hair.

Lo: It looks like a homework assignment.

D: There's not much in here, but I think it's a freebie that I picked up in Silverlake.

AA: I kind of like it. I think I would want to read this. Ooh! It's got some nice ads on the back cover along with some ratings of bars. The star method, they rate them for, "fornication potential, babe meter, music, and pour." It looks like the Score Bar got the overall best ratings.

D: Here's another freebie called the ***Silverlake Local*** (POB 39421, LA, CA 90039, Free). I think there was a whole controversy about whether Silverlake was one word or two. You might be able to learn about that in here.

Lo: Oh my god. That kind of gives me an icky feeling.

AA: I don't know what you'd do with this magazine.

D: If you really want to know what's going on in Silverlake and you can't find your way to Millie's or Spaceland, then you can read this, or you can read about Silverlake in ten years, which will make it seem more exciting than it actually is today.

AA: I always get lost whenever I go to Silverlake.

D: Me too.

AA: I don't think I'd read this.

D: My favorite new zine, ***Mother-Fuckin Titty Suckin Two-Balled Bitch*** (1951 W. Burnside #1653, Portland, OR 97140) is beautiful all the way around. I like every little thing about it. This beginning part is, "Fifty shitty things people did to me." It's kind of pathetic, but then there's something very spiritual about it.

Lo: Oh good, a quiz. I always like quizzes.

D: "Vaginas taste like: A) saltines, B) honey mustard, C) wouldn't know, D) vaginas.

Lo: Penises taste like: A) chicken, B) armpits, C) penises, D) vaginas. Yeah, that's a good quiz.

AA: This cover's awesome. I've often eyed this in your bathroom. I haven't opened it, because I don't read on the toilet.

D: This magazine called ***Two Fears*** (3415 22nd St. #24, San Francisco, CA 94110, $1.25) has what looks like a picture of Siamese twins that are joined at the brain on the cover.

AA: And inside are comics, I'm not sure, well, I guess I shouldn't really open it, but I like the way... I know, you guys open them, but I like to stick with judging them by the cover.

D: What is your problem? The rules are so stiff.

AA: Those are the rules.

D: You're the one that opened the first one.

Lo: Yes, you started this. You're to blame.

AA: All right, then I'm going to open it. It's a comic book. It looks like it's probably pretty interesting. It's Xeroxed.

D: Too bad we don't have time to read it, that's why we're reviewing everything like this. All right, this magazine, ***Scrawl*** (POB 205, New York, NY 10012, $2.50), is so ugly because you shouldn't use a script or italicized logo. You just don't do it. Rasputina, who my sister really likes, are so ugly on this cover. It's horrifying. It looks like they're trying to sell some new vampire sitcom or something.

Lo: Three gothy chics in billowy dresses and fingerless gloves.

D: My sister says they're a really good band, but they're hella ugly.

Lo: They're not *that* ugly.

D: The black lipstick chic looks like Karen Carpenter meets the girl who played Olive Oil in the *Popeye* movie.

AA: I would never even open this magazine. I'd leave it in the bathroom. In fact, if it would fit, I'd flush it.

D: That's so mean. ***Crimewave U.S.A.*** (POB 980301, Ypsilanti, MI 48198, $3) has a pink cover, so I'll like it.

Lo: It has Charo on the cover, so I'd definitely like it.

D: Charo, whose name I just learned the other day.

Lo: Ay ay ay!

D: Her real name is about a mile long, so no wonder.

Lo: De la Hoya, De la...

D: Yeah, it's so long.

Lo: De Guadalupe.

D: *Crimewave U.S.A.* is always good. It's about Mark and Lynette, and they just kind of go around and crimewave the U.S.A. Oh, I want to read about nerds and nature. I wonder if that's nerdy bugs, or the animals. Who are the real geeks of the animal kingdom?

D: Well, ***Dishwasher*** (POB 8213, Portland, OR 97207, 50¢ + a stamp) rocks our world.

Lo: This is actually my favorite *Dishwasher* cover.

D: This *Dishwasher* cover is lovely, we have to keep this one. The guy from *Craphound* did it, I think. It's really nice, and it has a fake napkin thing.

AA: Wow, that's a really beautiful cover. I really like that zine, too.

D: It's 50 cents. Can you beat it? No.

AA: I would definitely read it, every word in there.

Lo: "One guy, 50 states, lots of dishes, plenty of time."

D: Plenty of time.

AA: Wait, that one's pretty, what's this, with the astronaut and snow? ***Primal Groove Brewing Company*** (POB 15125, Portland, Oregon 97293-5125). It says, "Frostbite Winter Ale" on the cover. The first thing I thought is it's a promo for some beer company, but when you open it up, it seems like it's not. It's actually a magazine. There's Christ running around in it, though. I don't know what the take is on that.

D: Well, if you're just going to look at the cover, it's really nice.

AA: It's a really beautiful woodcut or something.

D: It's one of the most delicious little covers. O.K., this is scary, ***Esoteric Popular Culture***. (c/o R. Koenig, POB 1672, Mineola, NY 11501, $2). Sometimes people come up with these titles that just explain everything.

Lo: We don't even need to read it.

AA: If it's popular, how can it be esoteric?

D: I wouldn't read this, but I might give it to Brian Doherty. I don't know why, but I think he'll like it. One has Sid Barrett on the cover, and the other one has *ReSearch Incredibly Strange Music* covers on their cover, and it doesn't explain why, but there must be a reason

Lo: ***Tomorrow Magazine*** (POB 148486, Chicago, IL 60614-8486, $5).

D: They're getting uglier, because we picked the pretty ones out at the beginning.

Lo: It has purple ink on the cover, that's pretty good. Other than that, I'm not inspired to open it.

AA: Oh, I like this magazine because it has the USDA AA grade meat stamp on the cover. However, underneath it says, "poetry, fiction, drama," which causes me not to want to read it. Ugh! It's a lot of poetry.

Lo: This one is called ***Blame it on the Fat Kid*** (POB 356, River Edge, NJ 07661, 25¢), and inside are: fat bands, fat things, fat flags, fattening food recipes and other things relating to being a fat person in today's thin world. I would definitely read this because it has some kind of cool drawings on the front, like they lifted from something clinical, and I don't trust skinny people. People who deprive themselves, I'm just not interested in dealing with martyrs.

D: ***Nemesister*** (Cheeky Press, POB 97, Culver City, CA 90232, $3)

Lo: That's a good title.

D: It reminds me of H.P. Lovecraft or something, but then it has spy girls. I guess the main character is some spy girl, and all of a sudden she becomes heavy metal, tit-spiked superhero girl. I didn't really notice this, because the way the title was written it made it seem kind of goth. It looks good though; Superhero Spy Girl written by a girl is Ben-approved.

D: ***Hello, Sailor*** (207 Sullivan Street #5, New York, NY 10012, $2.50) is a lovely looking zine. I wish the photo came out a little better, but anyway, it's lovely, I have nothing else to say about it. Oh god, the guy from *Fantasy Island* is on the back. That makes or breaks a magazine, I don't know which. The one thing I do want to say is that I like the layout. A lot of times these small zines just don't take the extra time. I think this is actually printed and not photocopied, and it makes the wonderful layout work even better. So, it looks really good, and I would read it.

AA: This is a very thick zine called ***The Big Takeover*** (249 Eldridge St. #14, New York, NY 10002-1345 $4.50). It's got Billy Bragg, the Descendants, the Lemonheads, it sounds like a late '80s indie rock zine

D: I already know too much about this zine. It's by music experts who know every single thing you'd want to know, and there's so many interviews that..

AA: Why is it so thick? I mean, I don't want to open it because I'm judging by the cover. I wouldn't want to read this much about the Lemonheads. Bye bye.

Lo: Here's a book called ***Sex American Style***.

D: And we hate them

Lo: "An Illustrated romp through the golden age of sexuality," We hate them because in San Francisco, when we had our book release party, they held a rival book release party. They were so threatened by our event that they had to have their own counter event.

AA: It looks interesting. I like sex – well, what do you know? *Travel back to the gold old days when heterosexuals were still fashionable.* I think it sounds interesting.

D: Great, so you go to their fucking book event.

AA: I don't think that I would go to either of your book events.

Lo: You *went* to our book event

D: You *were* our book event

AA: All right, let's move on.

Lo: Here's a couple issues of ***The Match*** (POB 3012, Tucson, AZ, 85702 $2.75)

D: It's anarchy!

AA: *An Anarchist Journal, The Match. Anarchism, a philosophy of resistance to, and criticism of...* blah, blah, blah. 116 pages. I think this looks fabulous. For anyone interested in anarchy, I would recommend this, and I haven't even opened it

D: Smart girl. I almost wrote a letter to them once, and I realized that I would never be righteous or P.C. enough to get by the criterion to not get slagged back somehow

Lo: They weren't going to let you in on the secret handshake. You just knew it. So, here's the latest issue of ***Eye*** magazine (301 S. Elm St., Suite 405, Greensboro, NC 27401, $3.95) There's a hideous baby face painted on it. It says, "collectible bad art." I would definitely open it just for that article because not only do I collect thrift store art, but when I took my painting classes in art school, I tried to make them look like thrift store paintings – it was the only "C" of my college career.

D: I still think it's ugly.

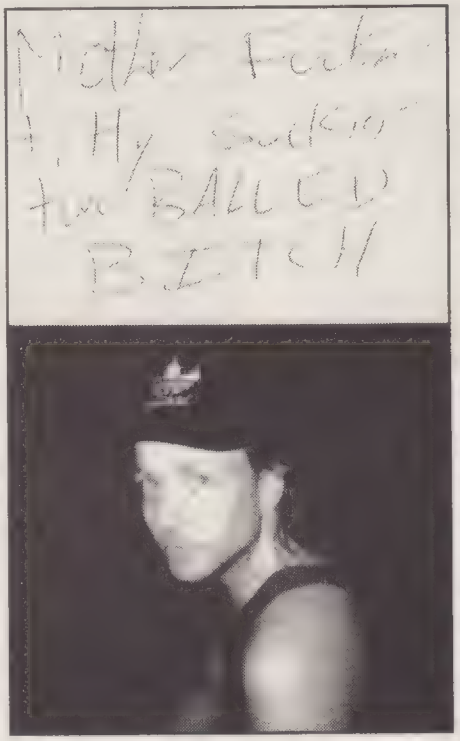
AA: It's really ugly.

Lo: Taste is priviledge, art is not

AA: ***Girlfriends*** (3415 Cesar Chavez, #101, San Francisco, CA 94110, $4.95). *Holy Ovaries: Dykes in the Convent.* What's new about that? There's sort of a dykey looking couple on the front cover

D: This is actually well-written, but everyone always looks ugly on the cover of this magazine.

Lo: Yeah, if they want me to open it, there's going to have to be some cute blonde girls on there.
D: Yeah, why do they have to be ugly, just because they're gay?
AA: They're not ugly. They're just plain Jane lesbians. This is not a lipstick lesbian magazine. This is just America's "fastest growing lesbian magazine". Send them some lipstick. Here, I've got some right here.
Lo: ***Porn Free****: The Porn Zine Dedicated to Getting You Off For Nothing*. It's 69 pages, get it?
AA: How can it be 69 pages? Doesn't it have to be an even number?
Lo: Apparently not.
AA: I like sex. Investigating the smoking fetish!! Wow!
Lo: I guess Lisa would open it.
AA: I would totally open it, because I'm interesting in the smoking fetish.
Lo: You don't smoke.
AA: No, but have you seen those movies? It's just girls smoking and it's considered porn. It's amazing. It doesn't make any sense at all. Not only am I going to open it, I want to read it.
Lo: Here we have yet another anarchy journal. I gleaned that as it's titled: ***Anarchy*** (C.A.L. Press, POB 1446, Columbia, MO, 65205-1446, $4). *A Journal of Desire Armed*. Chaos frightens me, so I wouldn't open it.
AA: I like anarchy.
D: There's no sex in there, Lisa.
AA: What about the liberation of desire? Doesn't that have to do with something? Armed desire?
Lo: For an anarchy zine, this cover is very totalitarian.
D: It looks very rigid.
AA: I think they need a new designer. I know it's anything goes with anarchy, but red, white and this weird royal blue? It's not an attractive magazine. I thought it was something about outer space.
Lo: Here's the new ***Mommy and I are One*** (POB 643, Allston, MA 02134). Dame Darcy did the cover, so I'd probably open it, because I've become strangely fascinated with her, even though when I first saw her stuff I couldn't stand her – I was probably just jealous. Now I like her so much that I paid forty-five dollars for one of her dolls. Oh, and there's an interview with her. And with Ween.
D: I think the meat I ate for lunch was bad, now that I'm done. Ugh, no monkeys!
AA: This magazine is called ***Vex*** (POB 319, Roselle, NJ 07203. $3.95). *The Kooks and Conspiracies Issue, movies and whatever.* It's purple, yellow, and it's got a lot of monkeys. I'm going to have to agree with Darby. I don't think I'd open it.
AA: This one is called ***PKD: Power, Knowledge, Discharge*** (POB 2961, Canoga Park, CA 91306, Free). *Cultural Criticism, Conceptual Virus, Agit-Prop Anathema. Special Los Angeles issue.*
D: It's called the break out your dictionary, come on, we need words for the cover of our new magazine.
AA: In the reportage section there's an article about French Post-Marxist and "PoMo Guru" Jean Baudrillard at Chance. I would open this to read that article, because I was there and I thought it sucked. If they agreed with me, I would maybe, *maybe*, give this magazine the time of day. ***The Cloven Hoof*** (POB 210666, San Francisco, CA 94121. $5). I would read this one. There's a Coop drawing on the cover. It's a really, really chubby devil girl.
Lo: *The Official Bulletin and Tribunal of the Church of Satan.* Anton died. I wonder if this is before or after. I think we got this before. Maybe that means that this will be worth something one day.
AA: Can I see that?
D: What's the cover Coop did for that band? Lords of Acid. It's like a fat version of one of the girls in Lords of Acid.
AA: That's so cool.
D: O.K. ***Lies Magazine*** (1112 San Pedro NE #154, Albuquerque, NM 87110, $3). There's actually a dragon and a dragon slayer on the cover. It looks like it was done in Macintosh before they were even doing postscript. It looks kind of interesting.
Lo: Maybe if I was a fourteen year old boy I would crack the cover.
AA: It looks kind of heavy metal. The word mythical, and the weird castle on it make me think Dungeons and Dragons.
Lo: Let me rephrase that, maybe if I was a zitty fourteen year old D & D freak who couldn't get chicks I would open it.
AA: Not only that, you'd write them letters.
D: Magazines that are eight and a half by eleven and open to the right like a regular magazine, and then make you turn the magazine so you can read it in the opposite direction is like sitting backwards in a moving vehicle, and it makes my head hurt. I can't read any magazine like that. Period.
AA: Next!... That's pretty. That's beautiful.
Lo: ***Experimental Thinking*** (2527 UCEN Annex, UC Santa Barbara, CA). There's a big phallic chopped hot dog on the front. So, Lisa would like this one.
AA: I think this is a beautiful cover. Don't read so much into it. I'm sort of a sucker for old cuisine photos. I don't really think it looks like a penis. Sometimes a hot dog is just a hot dog, Lorraine.
Lo: I don't know...
AA: Oh god! It sucks inside! I'd rather drown in my own vomit than read this. Shouldn't have opened it.
D: Here's a real official ***Craphound*** (POB 40373, Portland, OR 97240-0373, $5). When I spoke with him in New Orleans, it was funny because he was showing his first issues. You know how his pages are covered with clip art, like there's not one little place to move? Well, his early clip art collages had a teeny bit more white space, and he was so flustered and annoyed. He was like, "This one has too much white space, so I re-did it for number six." Then he showed the new version, which was packed even more. Now that is a man that I can relate to.
Lo: In my art history classes, they would show us paintings by patients in mental wards, and they're compelled to fill up every single inch of space. It's a phenomenon called horror vacuii, and it's fear of empty spaces. Most critically insane and schizophrenic artwork shares that same characteristic – remember when we saw that show of Wesley Willis'?
D: Oh yeah! His drawings were all like that.
AA: Wow! Can you use this clip art for your own zine?
D: Yeah, but he steals it. He gets it from wherever. A lot of it people just send it to him.
AA: That's great. This is amazing.
D: O.K. Here's a whole bunch of ugly newsprint mags about music. ***Hellbender*** (POB 547, Vails Gate, NY 12584, $2); ***Big Bang Fanzine*** (Ben Interbang, 620 W. Spruce St., Ravenna, OH 44266, Free.), now that might have a little bit more in it; ***Infinite Onion*** (POB 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408), I like that name; ***Motion Sickness*** (6221 Delmar Blvd. #202 Rear, St. Louis, MO 63130, Free). It's like these could all be done by the same guy. These two at least have color: ***Oculus*** (POB 148, Hoboken, NJ 07030, $5/6 issues); and ***Blue Stocking*** (POB 6706, Portland, OR 97228-6706, $3).
Lo: So those are the two gems in the ugly newsprint catagory?
D: Well, the newsprint doesn't end there.
AA: How can you miss with a cover like this?
D: What does it say on the bottom?
AA: Just a bunch of bands that I never heard of.
D: Is this art? ***You Sank My Battleship*** (822 Guilford Ave., #141, Baltimore, MD 21202), but that's trying to be more than just music.
Lo: It's delving into cooking, "Cooking with Miss Fabulocity and Pussy."
D: What is this one?
Lo: ***Hangover*** (39 E. 1st, New York, NY 10003, Free). *The New York Hangover Ode to Spam.* I'd probably open it because I like to make people lamps out of Spam cans.
D: You do not like to make *people* lamps out of Spam cans, you like to make Steve McDonald lamps out of Spam cans.
Lo: ***Chicken is Good Food*** (POB 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030-5585, $2). I had a friend who was obsessed with poultry. There's a FYP article in here. That same guy was really into FYP. I wonder if this is his... no, he's not on the masthead.
AA: I don't know which is the front and which is the back of this. It's called ***A Punk Kid Walks into a Bar*** (POB 254, Rye, NY 10580, Free).
Lo: Ouch!
AA: Is that what it's called?
D: You have to ask the real zine people who have been in the business a long time. They'll always be able to tell. Yes, that is correct. It's issue number nine. It's free in person, and a dollar postally. There's a picture of a man with a screw going through his head on the cover, and it looks painful. Take a look.
AA: This is called ***Coagula*** (POB 5021, Huntington Park, CA 90255).
D: You know this one. You must, because you're art.
AA: I always look in here to see if there's any gossip about my friends that's not true.
D: And is there?
AA: I'll have to look.
D: Is there usually?
AA: Usually there's something about someone. Like this, this is mean. I can't even read this. *The 20 Most Boring People in the Art World*
Lo: That's a really old issue. They've had at least one issue since then.
D: Are there people you know on that list?
AA: I'd rather not say. Maybe half of them.
Lo: Remember they took pictures of us when we went to that party and you were in drag? Did they ever send the pictures?
AA: These people took pictures of you guys? I'm afraid that they're going to find out who I am. They put a name with a face, and then it's like, no mercy. It's just a bitchfest.



D: Here's another newsprint one, it's called ***Screed*** (POB 9254, Cincinnati, OH 45209-0254, free). It goes in the music category. I think it also focuses on local issues like local coffee, local bagels...
Lo: Important social issues relevant to our time.
AA: I wish that South Passadena had a local zine, 'cause I don't know where to get bagels. There's no bagels in my neighborhood. Maybe if we had some zines.
D: The Bagel Zine, someone will do it.
Lo: Not just for Jewish people anymore.
AA: ***Adbusters*** (1243 W. 7th Ave., Vancouver, BC Canada, V6H 1B7, $5.75). I took home a copy of *Adbusters*, and I enjoyed it thoroughly. I thought it was a very funny, nice magazine, and the cover's great. I would read this, because I liked it last time.
Lo: If only we could get someone from this magazine to fly down and intern here at *Ben Is Dead*
D: ***Hecklers***.
AA: I would totally open this. It says snow on it.
D: Why don't you do a real review of this.
AA: I'm going to put this under my pillow and see what kind of dreams I have.
D: That'll be for the dream issue. Lisa'll sleep on all of the zines.
Lo: I think that should be how we review all the stuff from now on.
AA: That would be so much easier.
D: ***Speak*** (301 8th St. Suite 240, San Francisco, CA 94103, $4.50). It's a ***Ray Gun*** wannabe. Something hipper than thou. I met this guy in New Orleans, and he led the panel, so I can't be mean.
Lo: Since when does that stop you... *I* could be mean.
D: It actually looks nice. If I had the choice between this or *Ray Gun* existing, I would pick this one.
Lo: Here's a shiny silver one, ***Faxploitation*** (Postmodern Press), that has little Kung Fu guys on it. I'm attracted to it because I'm

attracted to shiny objects, like a crow.

D: I thought it had something to do with ***Grand Royal***, because they keep using karate images, and those are Sumo wrestlers.

AA: Oh, I would not even...This magazine is called ***Pups Zine*** (POB 510, Southwick, MA 01077, $1).

Lo: You're a cat person? I am too. So is Darby.

AA: I hate dogs.

D: We all hate dogs. ***Rocktober*** (1507 E. 53rd St. #617, Chicago, IL 60615, $5/10 issues). This is good because it says "for retro tastes", and it keeps the retro thing alive while the book is out on the shelves, but more importantly, because there's a little, teeny, teeny picture of Dee Snyder from Twisted Sister, and I think this is a beautiful cover – the guy did this an hour before he went to the printer.

Lo: He broke out the magic markers

AA: The texture of the marker comes through on the printing. It looks nice. I always thought that the word *Rocktober* was great. School started, and then you got *Rocktober*. In Chicago it was a big deal.

D: Not in L.A.

Lo: This is a very poorly drawn Jack in the Box, on ***Amusing Yourself to Death*** (POB 91934, Santa Barbara, CA 93190-1934, $2). You gotta go somehow, you might as well go amused.

D: It says "zine news" on the cover. I think it's about zine culture.

Lo: I have enough zine culture. I choke on zine culture.

D: Anyway, there's the ***Killzine*** (POB 3166, Hollywood, CA 90028, $3) for that kind of stuff.

Lo: ***Halftruth*** (POB 168, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254-0168, Free).

AA: It's like those old promotional hours for 'tards.

Lo: I wouldn't read this because the cover is yucky.

D: Is that thing in his pants?

AA: Oh my!

Lo: Oh grody!

D: What is it doing? Is it going up his butt?

AA: I thought it was a beer bong, but it isn't.

D: It would not be that, no.

AA: This next zine has a topless woman on it. Oh! And it's the magazine that hates the French. I would like this magazine, and I would want to read it.

D: Anyone who hates the French is good at *Ben is Dead*.

Lo: Anyone who is willing to run over French ex-husbands with a bus.

AA: Oh, and there's naked people on the inside too, but they're fat men. Hmm. Maybe they're French.

Lo: So this one is called ***The Great God Pan*** (POB 491, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254-0491, $3), and it's pretty. Nice warm oranges and corals. I like warm colors. It has this picture of Jesus on it, which doesn't really look like Pan, and he has a halo. I'd probably flip it open... until I found out that it's about music.

D: People, can we please stop doing music magazines just so we can get ads to pay for the magazine? *We* take the ads, and we don't write about music anymore.

Lo: It's not *all* about music. Slumber Party Rituals: How to play Bloody Mary

D: I like this cover a lot. Since it's a cat, we will accept it. ***Alternative Press Review*** (C.A.L. Press, POB 1446, Columbia, MO 65205-1446. $3.95). This is one of those magazines with a format that never changes. There are reviews about mostly zines and then alternative media articles. It's good, though.

Lo: Because it has a cat on the cover. Here's some called ***Semibold*** (1573 N. Milwaukee Ave. #403, Chicago, IL 60622, Free). They all have cute illustrations of cute girls on them. I'd read them. They're xeroxed well. They don't look like so many of the bad Xeroxed ones, and they're neon colors. So even though it's not something that is hugely expensive to make, it still looks really good.

AA: We have two issues here of ***Black Sheets*** (POB 31155, San Francisco, CA 94131, $6).

D: This is really nice what they did with the lettering. This is really pretty.

AA: This looks like it could have come out in 1972, or now. A mustachi-o-ed, leather-clad fag on the cover. I'm just assuming he's a fag, I don't know for sure, because it says it's about bars, baths and brotherhood. Oh, and it's got an article, "Gay Erotic Art, Then and Now". It looks fabulous.

Lo: I like this cover of ***Pop Smear*** (648 Broadway #200, New York, NY 10012, $3).

AA: It looks a lot like the ***National Enquirer***

Lo: It has Jenny McCarthy on it. I like Jenny McCarthy.

AA: It's got these people that look colorful and nice.

Lo: Hey, it says "porn", Lisa. It says "funny stuff". You like funny stuff?

AA: I like funny stuff, and I like "driving drunk". There really are porn reviews in *Popsmear*. Wow! *Butt Motors* is reviewed. Tammy Ann is in it, and I like her

AA: ***Paper Money***

Lo: It's a nice pink.

D: Is that red?

Lo: Tulipy?

AA. Fuschia?

Lo: It's like neon rose.

AA: Magenta?

Lo: Coral?

AA: Vermilion?

D: It's the color that when you dye your hair pink, it usually ends up this faded pink color that's really, really ugly. Salmon?

Lo: If only we had our box of 100 Crayolas.

D: Anyway, there's lots of money in here. I want to learn about money. I never really understood or experienced the whole thing, so maybe I should sleep on it.

AA: Is it a zine about money?

D: Paper money.

AA: It's sort of ironic that someone would be making a zine if they know about money. What's this one called? Darby, O expert?

D: ***Dumb Sulk Trigger*** (POB 13220, Galashiels, Scotland TD1 2YF, $3)

AA: No. Wouldn't pick it up. It's Xeroxed, and it's got a comic on the cover. It's a cover on female masturbation fantasies

D: All right, I might open it.

Lo: Hasn't that already been beaten into the ground?

AA: You can't have enough. ***I Can't Turn Off My Brain*** (POB 281, Berme Rd., High Falls, NY 12440, $2) with a picture of a screaming woman. It says, number three, The Snowed-In Issue. I like to see what people are thinking about when they're snowed in, so I would read it

D: Anything about snow you can address to Lisa Ann Auerbach c/o *Ben is Dead* magazine. What is your criteria?

AA: Snow, sex, and white space.

Lo: I would flip through this ***Permission Magazine*** (665 Third St. #245, San Francisco, CA 94107, $5), because there's a girl with cute makeup on the cover. She has green false eyelashes and green lipstick. It's a pretty cover. I don't know what it's about.

D: It's death rock techno

Lo: When you open it, there's more girls with fake eyelashes. I really like fake eyelashes. Unfortunately, they're kind of hard to wear with glasses because they hit.

AA: You can get shorter ones.

Lo: What's the fun in that?

D: Visual: Lisa moves one eyeball to the left, and one stays straight ahead.

Lo: That's talent. This one's called ***XLR8R*** (1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117. $2.95). Oh, accelerator! I get it.

D: See how quick Lorraine is.

Lo: ***Superstar Sleazy Spiral Liquid Lost Down Under***. I'm getting a really bad feeling that this is a rave magazine. I like the pretty colors of rave stuff, but other than that... The last rave I went to was in high school. It was when you had to buy the map for twenty dollars, and then follow directions to the warehouse. They got busted so many times that I gave up completely.

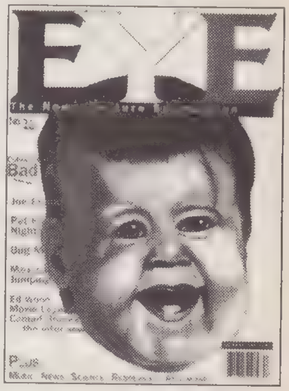
AA: This magazine is called ***Temp Slave*** (POB 8284, Madison, WI 53708-8284, $3). There's a picture of a bunch of men with sledge hammers hammering on a giant woman. I expect that it's a magazine about misogyny. Perhaps it's a magazine about work. Because I'm an inner Marxist, I would read this.

D: ***Smokes Like a Fish*** (140 Cadman Plaza West #7e, Brooklyn, NY 11201, $3) is supposed to be some guys from Geffen records exploring their greatness through the zine culture. It doesn't really pan out.

AA: So they can use the Xerox machine at work?

D: Anyway, I found this really, really boring. I expected more from them. I think they should try again. I hope they still advertise.

Lo: Oh! Here's the new ***WhAP!*** (POB 69491, Los Angeles, CA 90069, $7.95). This magazine is so great. ***Women Who Administer Punishment***. It's an actual punishment/fetish magazine, yet it appeals to not just perverts – spankings for everybody! The articles are well written and entertaining. Another great thing about this magazine is that they don't waste any time trying to *convince* you that women are superior and should be dominant – the articles are written from the perspective that it's a *given*. It has that whole vintage look of old stag magazines, but it's more for women.



D: Women want to read about women who administer punishment?

Lo: Yeah, it's kind of a how to keep your husband in line type of thing.

AA: Wow, "a modern woman's guide to marital bliss." I was thinking of starting a career as a dominatrix, so maybe they have some career advice for me. I thought it would be a good way to make a little extra cash, I mean everyone says I'm such a bitch. Maybe I'd be good at it. Maybe I have a natural affinity for this. There's a picture of a woman having her shoe shined.

Lo: That's the editrix, actually.

D: That is? She looks like she could be the friend of the pretty star in some '50s movie. In real life, she's got the guy.

AA: And right where she needs him, shining her shoes. She's winning.

Lo: That's her husband. They like *Ben is Dead*, they come to our events. At the Golden Apple Zine Con, Jeff overheard him say, "I want to buy this zine, but I have to go ask my wife for my money."

D: What is the guy like?

Lo: He seems very well-behaived. I'm sure she has him well trained.

D: ***Driver's Side Airbag*** (POB 25760, Los Angeles, CA 90025. $4) is a poetry/story/art/misc. thing and I don't read this kind of stuff and nobody here does either, do they? There's art by Blair Wilson, and he rules, so somebody will pick it up. I think I've talked to them and they're very nice so I'll leave it at that.

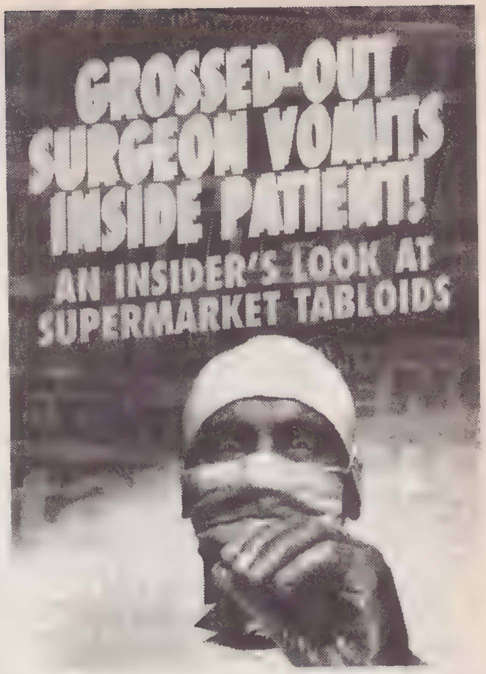
Lo: So what we're saying is, if we did read this kind of magazine, if we had to pick one to stay alive while the rest would spontainiously combust, this would be the one that we would save from a firey death.

AA: I don't like poetry. Next. Oh, this looks good. Have you seen this? ***The Stomping Snooper***, (POB 8072, Columbus, OH 43201). Who is the Stomping Snooper? And then it tells you who it is.

Lo: Lisa's intrigued, I can tell. She'd open it.

D: This is getting close to *Whore*. How could we have loved a magazine so much, and not gotten any response? *Whore*, where are you?
AA: I can't believe they didn't respond to my love letter. There will never be another *Whore*. This is really good. I think this is maybe interesting. I would definitely read this cover to cover. I like their font, which is just typewriter. I like their pragmatic size. I like this magazine, and I like how it's kind of messed up and torn from the postage. Hmmm, apon further scrutiny, I'm not as impressed. It fails in comparison to *Whore*. It's from Ohio. Anything else?
Lo: You've said it all.
D **_Black Hole Lipstick_** (POB 422, Great Falls, VA 22066-0422, $2). The cover has a drawing of a lipstick. by David Lasky. He drew in our centerfold at the Comic Con. He was cute.
AA: This looks pretty good too, but it's laid out too well. It's called, **_Knockwurst_** (sammy@inforel.com, free). I don't really have much to say about it. It's certainly no *Whore*. Did you see *Whore*, Lorraine? Was *Whore* pre-Lorraine? You missed... It was the best magazine... Here's a good magazine for you guys.
Lo: Oh, **_Eight Track Mind_** (POB 14402, Chicago, IL 60614-0402, $2). They stopped snipping the top corners of their zine to look like an 8-track tape shape. This zine's been out for how long, and Darby and I only recently realized that... you know, one-track mind, eight-track mind?
AA: This is a magazine I can't tell where the cover is again. Is this the cover? **_Smith Corona Presents the Racer-X Diaries_** (2610 White Oak, Houston, TX 77009). I opened it, and some things are upside down, but I guess we're not supposed to open them. It looks maybe interesting, but I can't figure it out. I'm too stupid, I'm too old, and I can't figure it out.
D: And the rubber is too tight.
AA: My rubber shirt is too tight and I'm sweating down my pants. My underwear is wet because my rubber is sending sweat down there.
D: That doesn't rhyme.
AA: This one's called **_All the Pretty Houses_** (POB 60692, Escondido, CA 92046). Very pretty type, and there's a picture of a house on it. I think if it's pictures of houses, I'd like it. But, I open it up and it's just type and I can't read it – it's very large type that makes your eyes hurt.
Lo: When you want houses and you just get large words...
D: Can we read one little bit? "My best friend Victor brought porno magazines to school when we were in Kindergarten."
AA: That is so not true.
D: This is a really, really disturbing magazine, **_E.C.U._** (POB 14222, Berkeley, CA 94712, $2.50). The cover has Alicia Silverstone, but her eyes are cut and turned upside down.
Lo: Her mouth is too.
D: It's a lot of type It's all about movies and celebrities.
AA: Oy Vey!
D: There is not one picture inside. I have a problem with that. We have **_Funky Spunk_** (POB 3821, Glasgow, Scotland, G46 6JY, U.K). It's like sweet-core, cake-core. It's rock stars and all that. You don't want to even look at it. Here's a zine called *New York* (609 Worth St., Pittsburgh, PA 15217). I started reading it, it looked good.

MORE BOOKS


GROSSED-OUT SURGEON VOMITS INSIDE PATIENT!
AN INSIDER'S LOOK AT SUPERMARKET TABLOIDS

GROSSED OUT SURGEON VOMITS INSIDE PATIENT!
AN INSIDER'S LOOK AT SUPERMARKET TABLOIDS
by Jim Hogshire (Feral House)
Someday after I've put in enough writing work behind me, and really feel a control – or understanding – of the words, I hope and dream that I may become, at the exhilarating pinnacle of my career, something as great as A Tabloid Journalist. That should be capitalized, shouldn't it? It's a very official, prestigious title. Nothing to cough, or sneeze, or hack at – well, maybe a little hack. But somehow, as my life and writing remains embroiled in pop-culture (fighting it is like swimming upstream… with breast implants), I have to wonder, is this my destiny? For all those horrible things I've done… For not believing in god has forced me to keep bottled up inside, churning itself into deep Jewish guilt – is this my restitution? Hating Brenda, living and reliving Retro Hell in numerous formats, having to bow down to the media machine to feed me meaningless information which I could then re-churn out within new purty packaging. When you get to this place, you know it. It's dark down here. You start to get used to it – even like it. It's decadent like dirty sex and drugs and celebrity gone sour.

Just beyond soap operas, around the bend from pop magazines, from the hoitey self-posturing *Vanity Fair* to the dregs of *People Weekly* – you *can* get lower. It's like a designer disease, inviting you to partake, right there in the grocery aisle, in plain as day public. When you pick it up the little voice says "give in." You do not really care what is truth or fiction any more. What is so bad, you ask, if it's all rumor, hearsay, or plain old lies? As far as celebrities go, they're fair game; they gave away their lives – that's their problem. As for the aliens, as far as you're concerned, they're public property, and we should be able to do with them what we will. We don't want to know FOR A FACT that Roswell didn't happen, and we will never accept that it didn't. We want to keep the dream alive, and continue being fed new bits and pieces of paranoia conspiracy at regular weekly intervals. Building our world out of words and fantasies. Why must we close the doors to all the possibilities? Why must truth stand in our way? There is too much information for anything to be true anymore. Like the law of averages, when you put all the truths together, half of them are heads, and half tails. Half real, half false. Anyone can prove this, because every word and every sentence and every action falls under this theory. Fuck, even O.J. is half guilty of murder and half innocent. And this is where the tabloid lives. The tabloid! A purveyor of society gone kooky. A completely catering rebel. It's anything you want it to be…

And when you think about all those hoity toity writers, who look down in disgust at the tabloid journalists, I say POO! They're the real down and dirty reporters They're the ones who can out-snake and disseminate before any other established press (besides the zines and web-sites, i.e. the Drudge Report) can muster up the courage and chutzpah (or stupidity). They've got luck. At least the kinda luck that ended them up at a job with practicable creative freedoms. And while the *LA Times, New Yorker,* or *Harper's* writer is still being fact-checked, the tabloid journalist is on a plane flying off to their next exotic reporting job – even if that exotic locale is just a figment of their imagination – at least they're allowed to have one! And, as far as my imagination goes, well, the pros of staying a hack pop-culture zine journalist and not hardly "amounting" to anything certainly do outweigh the cons. 'Cause in my world of never-ending half-truths, I'm allowed to write a book review – say anything on the planet I feel like about it, make it all up if I so desire – without ever having to actually read the thing. In my world, I can honestly tell you that this book is a great book. With the frame of mind of a true tabloid reader, I can decide, right here and now, before even opening the pages, that I believe the whole damn thing. And I can even admit that if it had a few more juicy photos, with some larger captions and headlines, I might even thumb through the sucker while waiting to get my ass on through the check-out line. [darby]

BAREFOOT GEN (THE DAY AFTER) by Keiji Nakazawa (Last Gasp)
This is an illustrated, mostly autobiographical story of Hiroshima as told by a seven-year-old named Gen, (who reminds me a bit of Spridle, from *Speed Racer*). This is the second graphic novel about Hiroshima by Nakazawa. In Volume I of Barefoot Gen, Nakazawa describes life in wartime Hiroshima and ended his book with the August 6th, 1945 atomic bombing which killed three members of Gen's family. This book chronicles the next few days of Gen and his mother trying to survive the aftermath. Despite 18 years of violence, desensitization courtesy of the big three networks, some of the scenes in this book nearly made me physically ill and touched me a hundred times more than *Schindler's List* (sorry Mr. Spielburg). Art Spiegelman notes in the introduction, "Comics are a highly charged medium, delivering densely concentrated information in relatively few words and simplified code-images." This book is the apex of the medium. Last Gasp recently bought the rights to this book. It was a wise move. This should be required reading in high school History classes. [ryan]

THE FUCK UP by Arthur Nersesian (Akashic Books)
Yes, I've been spending a month reading books about homeless guys living in NYC during the '80s. Unlike Zedd's memoirs of an underground opportunist, Nersesian's novel *The Fuck Up* could have been a blueprint or a warning for the "slacker generation." After being thrown out of his girlfriend's apartment, Nersesian's narrator stumbles onto a series of adventures which draws him into the downward spiral of both physical and mental deterioration. Like Odysseus, Nersesian's narrator is given free rein to exercise his will in numerous situations which offer potential solutions to his living situation. Yet, despite his intelligence and poetic insights, he makes wrong choices, always opting for the easy way out. Throughout the novel the protagonist remains unchanged - he's basically a guy with no living skills, crawling through life without a plan - a perpetual adolescent. In other words - a fuck up. Arthur Nersesian is a writer of exceptional talent. His rich narrative prose brings the energy of New York City to the page. Even if you find the protagonist unlikable and undeserving of your time or attention, Nersesian's writing and skills as a storyteller are such a pleasure to experience that you will be unable to put this book down. [patty p.]

JOINT ROLLER'S HANDBOOK (Quick American)
The best thing about this book was the free rolling papers that came with the press kit, otherwise the book is too small to roll a fatty on, and gives impractical, however comical, joint-rolling techniques. Maybe I would have liked it better if it came with some promotional dope. [jack]

JULIE STRAIN'S SIX FOOT ONE AND WORTH THE CLIMB (Heavy Metal Books)
Kevin Eastman, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle artist, is the ultimate comic-geek hero. He turned a silly (really kinda stupid) comic parody concept from a black-and-white self-published thing to a full-on media empire: hit TV shows, movies, even breakfast cereal. The TURTLES made him very rich, and he hasn't turned his back on his roots. He bought out the failing *Heavy Metal* magazine – every horny comic geek's dream publication, alternately filled with confusing, artsy-fartsy french stuff from the likes of Moebius that could help convince them that, hey, this stuff is *serious art*, and most importantly, inhumanly exaggerated drawings of lots of pneumatic long-legged naked chicks. He financed an 8,000 square foot comics museum in Northhampton, Mass, called the Words and Pictures Museum of Fine Sequential Art. He is trying very hard and very sincerely to do good by the freakish, scorned medium that made his dreams come true.

The ultimate Eastman dream-come-true is the subject of *Six Foot One and Worth The Climb*, a new hardcover under the *Heavy Metal*

also, don't forget *Dangerous Drawings*, the Juno book w/ mucho comic star interviews – some good stuff.

imprint: his wife, Julie Strain. Strain is pretty close to a human example of the *Heavy Metal* fantasy chick, and is indeed used as a model for such in several paintings and a forthcoming *Heavy Metal* movie. This book is a photo-autobiography of Ms. Strain-Eastman, the queen of that weird (well, not that weird when you think about it) nexus between the world of comics and the world of quasi-porno cheesecake. Lots of comic book shops, including L.A.'s own venerable Golden Apple, provide ample evidence of this cross-fascination between comics and cheesecake festooning their walls. Eastman even met his future wife by getting in line to have his picture taken with her at a Golden Apple signing. Eastman is doing right by his fan base: living out their dreams for them.

Strain was a Penthouse Pet of the Year in 1993, when she was already 31 – way over the hill for most nudie models. She's since become an omnipresent star of straight-to-video action/adventure movies, specializing as the tough heroine chick. She's six foot one, sports nicely-surgeryed face, teeth, and tits, and is, yes, (says this 29-year-old male comic book fan) quite burningly sexy in many of her images. She has a curiously malleable appearance, and with the addition or subtraction of a wig, chain mail drapery, or tight leather bondage gear, can look like many different women, which helps because this book has literally hundreds of images of her, both pre- and post-fame, though less than half of them are true knockouts. No hardcore stuff here – no faked sex, no partner shots, no genitalia close-ups, just old fashioned pretty, sometimes fetishized, woman respectfully viewed from many steps back.

I honestly don't know the critical standards for a book like this – it's 160 pages long, costs $31.95, tells you what she and her husband want you to know about her life and career briefly, and has loads of both photographs and fantasy-art paintings of an often strikingly sexy lady both in sexy outfits, unsexy outfits, and NAKED!! NAKED!! NAKED!! Does that sound good to you? It's not that complicated. Books like this defy commentary – it is what it is, it's honest about what it is, it's a pure product of capitalist excess – it would be hard to say anyone needs non-books like this – and as such is to be respected all the more. If you need a personal observation, well, to me so many different images of the same stranger's body can be a little tedious for arousal purposes, but I guess this is for the fan who feels some sort of genuine affection for Ms. Strain-Eastman, not just any old jerk looking for something to make his cock throb. If you think you love Ms. Strain, you'd have to love this book. [brian]

THE OVERSTREET TOY RING PRICE GUIDE
3rd edition by Robert Overstreet (Gemstone Publishing)
This book has a picture of every toy ring ever made ever (including many comic book hero rings), and tells those of us lucky enough to own some of them just how much money they're worth – assuming of course, that one could find a buyer. If you've forgotten exactly what that certain ring you mailed off twenty Ovaltine labels to procure looked like, then all you have to do is look it up, encyclopedia-style in order to re-live (and to kick yourself for letting your mom sell it at a garage sale for 25¢ when you see how much it's worth today). This book is more appealing than many price guides I've seen, possibly because it's not all about the cash (what with it's reprints of the original ads and the occasional brief histories), and possibly because it's attractive to me on so many levels: I'm a fan of toys, tacky jewelry, pop culture, small shiny objects, and the amassment of material possessions. [lorraine]

TOTEM OF THE DEPRAVED by Nick Zedd (2.13.61 books)
Totem of the Depraved is an amusing collection of stories based on Zedd's experiences as a perpetually homeless underground film-maker struggling to get by in New York City and abroad. This is the portrait of a man driven to get the most out of every beautifully hideous experience life tosses his way. This book could have been called "Sex for Survival" as we watch a once-again evicted Nick move onto the next bar in search of the next girl to move in with. Zedd reveals little about his work as a film-maker other than his ongoing obsession to get money to make films. What makes the book hilarious and worth the read are the sex scenes and subsequent debauchery of his numerous relationships. As depraved and desperate as many of these women appear, when all is said and done, no amount of fucking, wit, intelligence, or talent can outweigh the burden of maintaining the cost of a penniless sponge. Hats off to Nick for his honestly. While his methods of survival are dubious at best, his convictions and ideals toward art and the underground are without compromise.

Having shared the exhaustive homeless route myself, I can't help but wonder why Zedd never chose the easier way out and became a male hustler. He could have saved himself a lot of grief by being self supporting and would have had money to produced more films. I suppose everyone has their limits. Maybe this one was Nick's. [patty p.]

VIRTUAL GOVERNMENT: CIA MIND CONTROL OPERATIONS IN AMERICA by Alex Constantine (Feral House)
An excellent overview of the CIA's Science fiction madness and mind control operations and Nazi tricks. Highly recommended – you can't be too careful. [jack]

Also, if you can search it out, Marcel DeJure's new short *Wig Rodeo* is unique. Congratulations Marcel!

www.comics

BY RYAN BIGGE

If you're a comic artist geek, there's a good chance you're also a single comic artist geek. My experiences with *Single Guy Zine* have taught me that women do not throw themselves at your feet just because you self-publish genius. Anyone willing to wrangle endlessly with copy centers and distributors either doesn't have time for women, or finds that women don't have time for them. Luckily, there are many technological outlets to fill the love void, my favorite being the Internet. I can spend hours trading e-mails with women I'll never meet in real-time – and the Pamela and Tommy on-line video helps to dull the pain slightly. But hidden between the titillation and silicone dreams, are silicon valleys of information for those who know how to find it. Thus, Darby hired me to be her single guy sleuth searching for comics in all the right places.

ARTCOMIC
<www.artcomic.com>
The best example of actual on-line comics that I could find. Along with one-panel guffaw generators, they have whole books here, but you'll need the patience of a saint to get through most of them. Luckily, you've probably got a lot of spare time on your hands. Their section on the Xeric Foundation has a series of links to many of the artists who've received payola. The ultimate in fanboy (or fangirl) convenience.

KABOOM: A DICTIONARY OF COMICBOOK WORDS ON HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES
<collection.nlc-bnc.ca/100/200/300/ktaylor/kaboom/>
Every once in a while, you'll come across something so completely useless, yet so utterly amusing that you fall in love with it regardless. I believe that was my ex-girlfriend's philosophy on our relationship, but it also describes Ka-Boom! Kevin Taylor has diligently put together a "Dictionary of Comicbook Words on Historical Principles." Words like Mmmwwwuuhh, Whack, and Bam are all detailed here. It's wonderful because it's nothing you'd ever pay money for, but it's a really great way to kill some time and have a few laughs. This motto was also applicable to my ex's philosophy about our more intimate relations.

THE COMICS JOURNAL
<www.tcj.com>
You've probably got lots of spare cash since you don't go on any dates, but if you're the sort of cheap deadbeat who can't be bothered to drop some coin for the best printed guide to alternative comics the world may ever see, then you can browse some of it for free while feeling like the miserly single worm that you are. The Comics Journal on-line also has Internet specific columns, an archive and sneak previews of the next issue. A truly cheap date.

INDYWORLD
<www.indyworld.com/comics/address.html>
Check out this list of industry addresses. Vital for those ready to schmooze and pester their way to the brass ring. Remember, similar to finding a mate, if one company won't give you the time of day, try another, and another, and another, etc. As well, go and check out the main page for the on-line version of *Indy* magazine, another really great publication converted into convenient web form.

SMALL PRESS COMICS FAQ
<www.sentext.net/~sardine/spfaw.html>
My 9th grade shop teacher had a sign over the door to his office that read, "There are no stupid questions, only stupid answers." At the time, I was very impressed by this pearl of wisdom. During the next few years of futile dating attempts, I quickly learned that there are indeed many stupid questions ("Will you go out with me?") and many stupid answers ("Not if you were the last man on earth"). Regardless of my pessimism, if you don't want to appear to be a comic virgin, then this URL for the Small Press Comics FAQ is a good way to talk the talk, even if you don't always walk the walk. Learn everything you ever wanted to know about independent comics but were afraid to ask.

ALTERNATIVE PRESS EXPO
<members.aol.com/apefive>
The Alternative Press Expo occurs the begining of each year in lovely downtown San Jose. Find out all you need to know about the social event of the year. Who knows, maybe that girl from *Chasing Amy* will be there.

THE FRIENDS OF LULU
<members.aol.com/lulula>
Girls and relationships will probably always be a mystery to us single guys, but we can remove the mystique of female comic artists somewhat. The Friends of Lulu are very female friendly, female supportive and generally very helpful. You can also visit <redtape.uchicago.edu/users/ lkabuaba/women.html> or **ACTION GIRL ON-LINE** at <ww.houseoffun.com/action/index.html> for links, resources, and women orientated information.

CLOUD NET > BRAVE NEW WORLD COMICS
<www.cloudnet.com/~hamlinck/spz.htm> or
<www.mcs.net/~dvoskuil/html/comrev.html> or
<www.bravenewworldcomics.com/link.html>
These three sites feature lots of links to comic publishers, creators, and other helpful resources. Will save you time and trouble in locating your favorite artist's home page – time you can use to pout about being alone.

COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND
<www.cbldf.org>
From what I've been told, screwing is a good thing – but having your rights screwed with is not. Believe it or not, The Man is trying to mess with our First Amendment Rights. Check out the latest information about the brave battles of the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund and how you can support their efforts.

THE COMIC SITES ALLIANCE
<www.wvinter.net/~philpcat/csa>
The Comic Sites Alliance is a graphic intensive site that features tons of great stuff. Unfortunately, it often crashed on me, much like my love life, causing me to yearn for what could have been. Still worth checking out though.

OTHER NEAT INTERNET SHIT:
Despite my anti-corporate agenda, I will grudgingly recommend going to <www.eu.microsoft.com/ie/chat> and downloading their Microsoft Chat. Once that ugliness is out of the way, you can choose to be a Jim Woodring rendered character and talk to other people – all while the program renders the chat as a comic strip in real time. Cool, eh? • <www.circus.com/~omni/comics/cca.html> contains the original standards of the Comics Code Authority. Essential reading. • Also try The South Park Wav Request Page at http://www.geocities.com/TelevisionCity/9819/spwavs. • html<www.mania.com/newsarama/newsarama.htx> or <www.wizardpress.com> Both feature frequently updated information about the mainstream comic world. • For a huge A-Z resource list of comic publishers go to: http//grove.ufl.edu/~jrm/address (more information available at: http://grove.ufl.edu/~jrm). Compiled by Jeff Mason, Editor of indy magazine; a bi-monthly magazine dedicated to the coverage of independent comic books, published by Blackmore Publishing. (jrm@grove.ufl.edu).

From: Robert Steven Connett <connett@znet.com> Subject: Re: Interview about Vomitus Maximus Museum

What happens when an artist becomes fed up with getting dicked around by art galleries? If you're Robert Steven Connett, one of your options may be a sharp knife... lots of blood... Luckily, in this advanced technological age, we have more choices. Mr. Connett talks about his life as an artist residing foremostly on the world wide web. E-mail interview by darby.

>What is your background? (schooling, art teachers, mentors, resume)? What made you/when did u decided to become an artist?
I did not attend art school. Since I was a child I have always drawn. I was always in trouble, and over time learned to make use of my artistic skills to express my distress. I started chopping off the heads of my teachers, principals and peers at an early age. In fact, I began to experience censorship way back in the first grade or so when I was told "Not to draw such terrible things." This, of course, inspired me to draw the most horrible imagery that I could come up with. Better yet, my Art then had to become "secret", hidden from my family and teachers. Being a child, I was unable to hide these awful little drawings for long, and before I was six "they" began sending me to a swarm of counselors, psychologists and psychiatrists. From the beginning, I looked upon these encounters as a way to learn to figure other people out...

My art was conjured in the same way. I would have a basic idea, usually inspired by anger or depression, and act that feeling out through images. I received inspiration from TV and comic books. I guess you could say that TV and comic books were my art teachers. I seldom read books, only looked at the pictures. In fact, I had a lot of trouble with reading and spelling. So much so that I was left back several years and forced to go to night classes with morons and mentally retarded adults. I was an avid comic book collector. I had subscriptions to just about all Marvel and DC comics. From these I learned to draw bodies. They also helped me delve deeper into a fantasy world.

VOMITUS MAXIMUS
MUSEUM
www.vomitus.com

Almost from the start, I was obsessed with eyes and body parts. I had a recurring dream, a terrible nightmare about thousands of staring eyes pressed against the windows, looking in on me. It was night in the middle of a raging storm. The sounds of the howling wind became the screaming voices of those terrible eyes. I had this dream over and over. It stopped when I was about twelve.

The body part thing probably came from the time I witnessed a terrible auto accident in which a woman and her two children were cut to pieces and killed. They were burned and their faces smashed beyond recognition. But I recall the dead eyes vividly. They reminded me of the dead people in the comics. The lady's arm was laying in the road like some sort of bloody plastic doll arm, splashed with broken glass and gasoline, it was smoking. I was about seven. When I saw this, I began to cry. My father told me to stop crying and "Be a MAN." That was the last time I cried for twenty five years.

As time went on, my obsession with death and mutilation grew. At some point my drawings no longer purged the anger and mental disorder that I felt. I began to lash out at living things. Whenever possible, people. I was eventually banned from the schoolyard during recesses due to excessive violence. Unfortunately people sometimes fought back, so I began to take out my feelings on more defenseless creatures. Every day I would hunt out animals to torture in the most horrible ways: burning, cutting, boiling, electrocution, smashing, twisting, pins in eyes, cutting of limbs, drowning, hot wax, poison, nailed to the cross like Jesus, shit, I can't remember all of it... I watched with glee at their torment, and prolonged the animals' pain as long as I could. I fancied myself a witch doctor of death and created a necklace of skulls; skulls that I slowly burned the flesh from so they would be intact. In the center, a large rat skull – surrounded by mice and lizard skulls. I wore this around my neck as I searched for new victims pretending that it made me invisible. I set trap lines where I knew they would do the most harm, and in those days you could buy a rat at the pet store for 25¢, no questions asked. I created a graveyard in the backyard of our house. I made such wonderful grave markers, some very elaborate indeed. After time the graveyard became so large that my father asked what the hell it was. I told him it was my dead "pets" so he allowed it, but said it seemed a bit dismal. I eventually lost interest in the torture and the graveyard for more mature endeavors, but it always stayed with me. How I liked the graveyard and all the killing day after day...

>Explain your experiences with art galleries. why you're now web only, and what does that mean. do you not do any other showings of your work? explain in detail how it works, exhibiting your work on-line. how has the feedback been? Explain what the difference has been between sales at galleries to sales over the web.
Most of my experiences with art galleries have been real bad, with a few exceptions. My only positive experiences with art galleries were with the RITA DEAN Gallery in San Diego and the LA LUZ Gallery in Los Angeles. I believe RITA DEAN is now known as THE MUSEUM OF DEATH. The owners, JD and Kathee became my close friends. They treated me square and fair and always came through with their commitments, in terms of

I like the crime comics. Sometimes they kill the girl. –child in *Seduction of the Innocent* both money and time. With that exception, Art galleries have been a BIG disappointment and a VERY BIG pain in the ass. I have experienced liars, incompetents, cheaters and thieves. And worst of all, the "scene"... FUCK the "art scene". These people think they had the first original thought. They get all dolled up in their "art costumes" and parade around like fools. The last thing on anybody's mind is "ART". The going commission rate for an art gallery is 50% to 60%. That is, they take 60% of your money after YOU pay all your expenses. To go through this, and then have the owners renege on their lousy deals, which happens all the time, is a capitol offense. So rather than bury somebody, I found another way.

The internet presented me with an entirely new venue. I am able to reach an audience that would have never seen my work otherwise. I average three hundred people per day in the Vomitus Maximus Museum. I get more people in three or four days on the internet than I would during an entire month showing in a typical gallery. In an average gallery (the ones that would show my work, that is), I would get the same old tired crowd of "Art Whores". Granted, there are some good people who frequent the so called "art-scene", but it has been my experience that these are the exception, rather than the norm. Mostly you get opinionated dullards who want a piece of you, rather than participate or interact with the artwork. The net allows people from all walks of life to view my work without the outside influences attendant at art galleries.

I am constantly receiving E-mail responses to my work. I get on average fifteen letters a day, seven days a week. They range from positive to extremely negative, and I love them all. People who don't write me directly write the comments and vents in my "Guest book". I get responses from all over the world. Hell, I even have one guy in China who took my entire gallery and translated it, word for word, into Chinese, and set it up as a separate website!

An artist rarely gets to hear the comments or feedback from the visitors to a showing in a "real world" gallery, except during an opening, when everybody is half drunk.

I love the one dimensional quality of the internet. It's so clean and germ free. So elegant. It is to me the meshing of flesh and machine. I become not only one computer, but millions... I am an electronic spirit haunting the synapse of a huge biomechanical beehive mind. There, my identity is obvious. I have a voice. In the "real world", I'm just another ugly mass of flab and blood, lurching down the dirty streets of Nowhere. On the Internet, I am a champion. It indulges the fantasy world which I created as a child.

What more could an artist want? Well, sales, of course. And I have made more sales on the net than I ever did in Galleries. I have made connections to do interviews, CD covers, posters, I sell prints, originals, T-shirts, and postcards. The overhead is almost nothing. The cost to register a website is about $50. The monthly maintenance is another $50, and $20 for your internet connection.

My main objective is to disseminate my work. This is the best way I have ever found. This has been successful way beyond my expectations. I am going to self-publish a book of my drawings soon and hope that this will be a good seller. I figure it's a lot easier to own my work if you can put it away. Many people may be interested in what I do, but they can't handle it on their walls. My stuff ain't "couch art".

>do you think any artist can exhibit this way? pros and cons. why and why nots.

I think any artist can be successful on the net for the same reasons that I have illustrated in this narrative. However, I established my presence quite a long time ago, 12/13/94 to be exact. It takes time to develop a following. And of course, one must become involved with computers. Many artists who I have met seem to be a bit phobic when it comes to machines. In my opinion, you are either "on the bus, or not on the bus." Unless you plan to die soon, you will be forced to become involved to a certain extent with computers, or you will be left to die. It's like refusing to use a telephone, or a motor vehicle. Sure, you can avoid them, but you'll end up being estranged from civilization. Maybe that's not such a bad thing... but realistically it's not an option.

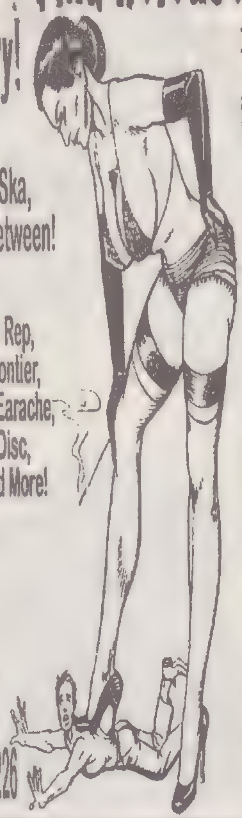
[end]

F L U F
THE NEW ALBUM WAIKIKI
"This is the fourth album by the three biggest assmunchers this side of Brookhurst." - O
© 1997 MCA Records, Inc.
visit FLUF at http://www.waycoolmusic.com
get AMPed: http://mcarecords.com
WAY COOL MUSIC

the kelley deal 6000
BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!
out now on new west records
http://www.kelleydeal.com
Records, Inc. under license from Nice Records

Looking For That Hard To Find Release?!

The Cheapest Mailorder In The Country!



We Carry Punk, Alternative, Industrial, Hardcore, Ska, Metal, Garage Gothic, & Everything InBetween!

Labels Like Wax Trax, Epitaph, SST, Relapse, Lookout, Am Rep, Walk Thru Fyre, Mystic, Cargo, Homestead, Frontier, Rough Trade, Revolver, Alternative Tentacles, Earache, Alchemy, Taang, Triple X, Dionysus, Shimmy Disc, Cleopatra, Nuclear Blast & A Couple Hundred More!

Send For A Free 32 Page Catalog Packed With 9000 Items!

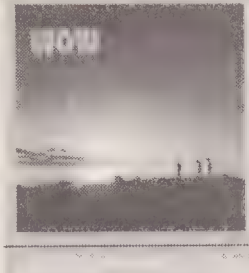
Round •Flat• Records

PO Box 1676-B Amherst NY 14226

www.rockfetish.com/roundflat/

THE MEDICINE LABEL

発売 1997 勝



UFOFU

•NEW CD•

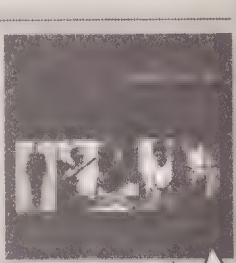
•"Just as you yield to the punk imagery, UFOFU is throwing around pieces of jazz, country, and fearlessly, Beach Boy harmonies."

ただのパンクだと思ったら大間違い。UFOFUの音はジャズ、カントリー、そして恐れを知らぬ各メンバーのハーモニーが絶妙。

JONATHAN FIRE*EATER

TREMBLE UNDER BOOM LIGHTS

ドアーズ、イギーポップ、ゴメズ・アダムスがピアノ工場に追突しようとしているジェット機のファーストクラスで酔っ払っているのを想像してごらん。



メディソン・レーベル

STILL BUYABLE 絶賛発売中

SUPER

THE CRAMPS "FLAMEJOB"

FUTURHYTHMS (Featuring Prodigy, Moby, Leftfield, Sven Vath and more)

詳しいことは、住所記入済みの封筒に切ってを貼って下記までよろしく。

Send SASE for more info to:
Medicine Label, 137 W.14th St., Suite 202,
NY, NY 10011 or email medicinelb@aol.com

笑顔が最高!!

the orange peels

square

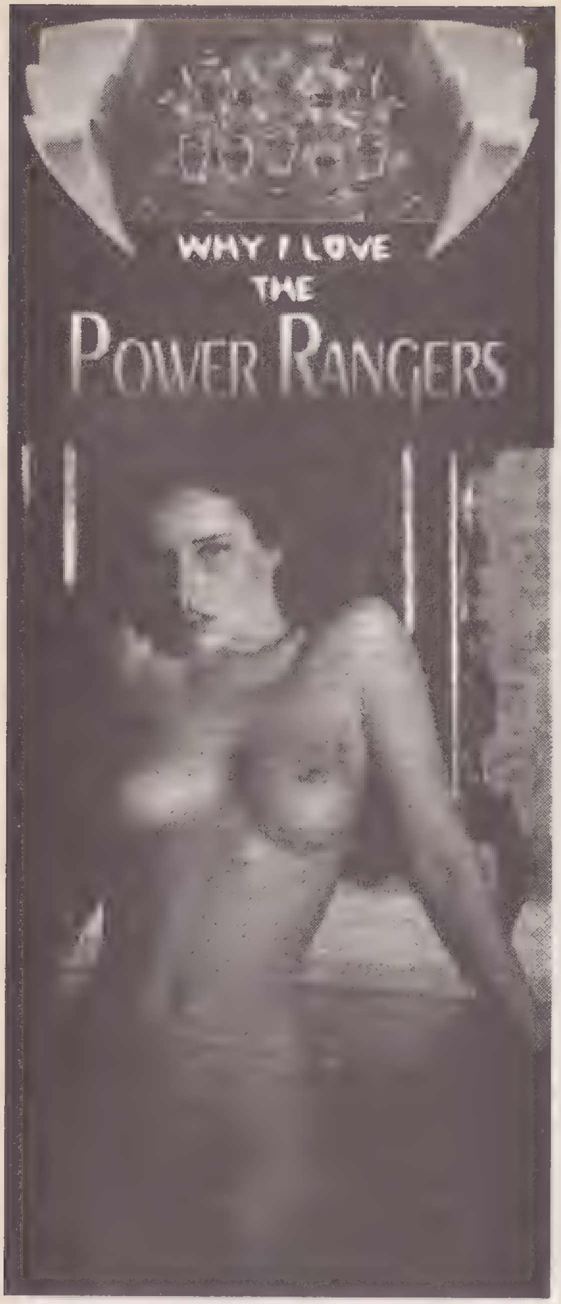
[illegible]

minty fresh
po box 577400 chicago, il 60657
www.mintyfresh.com

GO GO POWER RANGERS!

DECONSTRUCTING THE MYTH OF THE MIGHTY MORPHIN' MONEY MACHINE

BY HOWARD HALLIS



One of the three nude photos of The Original Pink Ranger, Amy Jo Johnson circulating on the web. Probably fake, but if it's real...whoo boy!!

People think I'm such a fucking geek for really liking *The Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers.* It's probably because most of the people in this city have been hired at one time or another by Saban Entertainment to work on the fucking thing, and are probably still bitter about it. They point out the obvious faults with the corporation: the actors and the crew don't get paid shit and the set designers all hate each other and the other basic Hollywood soap operas that go on behind the scenes. Oh well... such is the case with non-union jobs.

Too bad it's so hard to get in those damn unions.

It sounds like you've been talking to someone who's been shoveling shit at Disneyland for the last twenty years. They forget that they're working in The Magic Kingdom they used to be in awe of when they were kids because the smell and the people and the boss and the drive and the work in the hot fucking sun day after day has sucked the magic right out of it.

All I can say is that I'm fucking glad I don't work at Disneyland. Or Saban for damn sure.

Well, my friend Hopey and I (you know, the one from *Love and Rockets* comics), thought it would be cool to check out The Power Rangers when they got their feet and hands immortalized in cement in front of Mann's Chinese Theater in the heart of beautiful Hollywood Blvd.

I had my Love Medallion on and I was stoned. Since the Power Rangers are supported by D.A.R.E., which is the demon child of the Nancy Reagan Presidency, I figured I'd do my part and support the cause by smoking a big fat bowl before the show. Hopey was wearing a silver mini skirt and a black t-shirt. She had plastic green elf boots on over her regular shoes.

We walked up to the humongous crowd gathered on both sides of the street and stood within a vortex of kids, cops, press and parents. Obviously the kids were either ditching class to see their favorite heroes, or they were part of the D.A.R.E. group which probably got to miss a hard working day of school as long as they promise to continue to stay clean and rat on any of their friends who become involved with The Demon Weed.

The cops were everywhere. It was like a Nuremberg Rally. You would think that the Power Rangers could call upon the force of their All Powerful Deity, Zordon, and his Boddhisatva, Alpha, to bring down their Mega Zords if there was any trouble from drug crazy juvenile delinquents and that the police presence would not be necessary, but it did not seem to be the case.

The parents were probably there because they love their kids, and after hearing them bitch and whine about how much they dig the Power Rangers every fucking day, felt it was their duty to drag the Munchkins out for a real trip to the Emerald City and show them the shit as close and personal as they're gonna get.

So Bulk and Skull, the "comic relief" team of the show, started off the festivities with a slew of bad jokes and inside humor to satiate the audience as we waited for our heroes to arrive. I like Bulk and Skull, they are obviously the best actors on the show. Anyone who can act so ridiculous and embarrassing *has* to really know what they're doing. They're carrying on the tradition of Laurel and Hardy, Abbott and Costello, Penn and Teller. The larger Endomorphic personality who partners and dominates the weak and timid Ectomorphic personality with subtle homosexual overtones. Bulk and Skull constantly try to team up to tackle their Mesomorphic superiors and unmask them, proving they are the dominant personality types.

But maybe it's unfair to say that The Power Rangers are all Mesomorphs. Sure they all do Karate and jump and *look* all buff in those fucking tights and boots, but when you think of the fact that it's really little Japanese guys sent over from the original Bandai shows (where *Power Rangers* gets most of its action footage that you see on TV) that are doing most of the fighting and stunts, you have to stop and wonder... are the actors we see really what they appear to be?

Can the myth of the new superhero that is shaping a new generation be just another sham? Fuck. Superman flew off his horse and broke his neck, can we still believe this man can fly?

The Power Rangers convey a message to the children who watch the show that seems to imply that through training, discipline, and trust, you will be able to crush your enemies and destroy all obstacles.

Sounds a fucking lot like "Be All That You Can Be" or "To Protect and Serve".

Not that there's anything wrong with this authoritarian trait within superheroes. Shit. Batman, Spider-Man, all of them are involved with the whole Good vs. Evil thing, and I don't think there's anything necessarily wrong with having epic gladiator battles with sinister monsters against giant robots. That's cool with me.

But the whole D.A.R.E. business and the anti-drug paranoia that is preventing logical government thinking in legalizing Hemp or *really* doing something about the economy has always left a bad taste in my mouth.

The D.A.R.E. thing is probably a political move on the part of Haim Saban, who knows his billion dollar baby could be seen as too violent by the conservative media watch dogs, and he would then be in danger of losing a sponsor or (even worse!) a licensing deal. So what does he do? Gives money to anti-drug groups. That should do it! He probably got the idea after doing so much coke that the irony of the whole thing overcame him and made him laugh like Ivan Ooze at the sheer stupidity of the human race!

It is kind of ironic how this Japanese import has been Americanized and re-packaged so easily. It's not very hard to figure out how. Just put together all the

Superman is dead? Good, I hated him. –Howard Stern science fiction gimmicks with a kung fu movie and add a bit of *90210* T&A. Godzilla meets Jackie Chan at the mall. Kids love this stuff. Many can't comprehend that those aren't life-sized space ships, and that what they are being fed is just propaganda.

The formula for the show is pretty simple. Evil Lord Zed or Rita Repulsa or another master villain create a monster, send it down to Angel Grove to wreak havoc in suburbia, and Zordon sees it through his all seeing Big Brother eye. He then calls in the Rangers (Angel Grove High School students), who morph into superheroes, karate kick a bunch of Putties (wussy drones made out of clay), and then get thrashed by the monster.

The monsters can be anything from a giant purse to a Lovecraftian octopus headed Cthulhu wannabe. Each done with a campy zeal that no one who watches the show can really take seriously.

The monsters then become really big, forcing the Rangers to call down their Zords and join together to become one big robot. They battle until the secret super weapon is put into use and the monster explodes, using the same fucking footage every show.

In the last few years there has been more new footage used as the archives of original Japanese shows diminishes. The costumes and vehicles constantly change as well, forcing the obsessed little tykes to rush back to the toy stores in search of the latest variations. More action figures and space ships = more money.

There have been two Power Ranger movies and a few clone shows like *V.R. Troopers*, *Masked Rider* and *Beetleborgs* that have expanded the Saban empire even further. Each of these shows is almost exactly the same in terms of plot structure and character development.

It's predictable, stupid and totally overplayed. But fuck all that. I like it anyway. So we waited about half an hour. Hopey was sitting on my shoulders to see over the crowd. It began to hurt after a while, but I didn't want to seem like a pussy and make her get off of me and wimp out. She'd kick my ass!

And then... In the heat of the Hollywood summer they arrived in their limos, one after the other, and the crowd went wild.

There were the Yellow, Red and Black Rangers! All who recently replaced the original actors just in time for contract negotiations and the movie opening. Guess Saban was not paying the original stars very well. So, like King Arthur sweep cleaning his round table of Knights, the pantheon of champions changed.

The Red Ranger used to be the leader, but was replaced by the White Ranger, who used to be Green. The Green Ranger was created first by the forces of evil and then made good by Zordon, taking command of the group. Does this somehow put forth a metaphor that Communism (Red), first fought Capitalism (Money-Green), but then when it was appropriated into Communist society, deemed it pure and good (White)? Obviously the original Communists probably detested this change, seeing that their power was all of a sudden swept aside. But like Gorbachev being thrown out in favor of Yeltsin, the original Red Ranger who once led our team of superpowered teenagers was replaced by another, very swiftly and smoothly.

For Haim Saban, money talks and bullshit walks.

Maybe that's why they recently introduced a "Gold" Ranger.

One thing I do like about the new Red Ranger is that he seems like kind of a bad boy. You know he probably smokes the doobage and thinks this gig is a good one while it lasts, but most likely has no illusions. I can imagine him saying: "Fuck it! I'm a Power Ranger! Pack up another bong load! If the first Red Ranger was booted so easily, I'm just gonna shut the fuck up, get stoned, and ride this roller coaster 'til it crashes!"

Smart move, dude.

The Black Ranger used to be played by a black actor, and the Yellow Ranger used to be played by an Asian actress. Color coding these minorities was probably seen as being the logical and obvious choice, but someone down the line must have seen this as being a bit too obvious and figured that there might be complaints. So what did they do? Replaced the Black with an Asian and the Asian with a Black! That will keep the P.C. police from cracking down for being too blatantly stereotypical! It does leave a better taste in my mouth. Now we know that the color choices for the Power Rangers were not chosen because of their ethnic backgrounds.

Then came Billy the Blue Ranger, played by David Yost. A born again Christian virgin who is supposed to be a really nice guy. He is probably the only cast member to live up to the pristine image that his superhero attempts to convey in the show. The Blue Ranger is the nerd, the highly intelligent computer expert who (if this was real life) would probably be really skinny and too busy talking on the Internet all day to be bothered with fighting intergalactic monsters. Hmmm... Maybe *I'm* being stereotypical now.

Right after Mister Purity's arrival came my favorite: The Pink Ranger. Played by Amy Jo Johnson, the girl from back East who you KNOW is a born-again valley girl snob who would have had her jock boyfriend beat you up in High School if she caught you looking at her ultra-fine Mighty Morphin' derriere. Yes, she looked so fucking good. She knew it too. The wet dream of every ten-year-old boy was live and in person before my eyes. And I wanted her. I wanted to make passionate love to the Pink Ranger, and in the middle of our wild sexual interlude, suddenly yell out: "DOUBLE-PRONG ROTATING DILDO-ZORD POWER... NOW!!!!" And have a giant electrical strap-on contraption fly out of the sky and land around my waist so I could maximize Amy Jo's pleasure and bring her to climax as only Kimberly the Pink Ranger can achieve!

Seriously though, I hear that The Pink Ranger is probably leaving the show to be replaced by some Australian actress. Too bad. Amy Jo wants to do other movies. I wish her well, but somehow I get the feeling that in a few years I might just get my chance to pork the Pink Ranger when she's working at Jumbo's Clown Room feeling bitter about her fifteen minutes of fame being used up. Maybe I'm wrong, of course. She *is* beautiful. I'd go to see an Amy Jo Johnson movie... especially if we get to see her naked... but if I was her, I would take this show for all it's worth. After all, how hard can it be being a pin-up for pre-pubescents?

Well, after all this, the White Ranger, Tommy, arrived. Now anyone who watches the show knows that there's sexual tension between the White and Pink Rangers. But seeing that Tommy is married with two kids in real life, it probably wouldn't last too long. The White Ranger opened his own Martial Arts studio in Los Angeles and seems to have a back-up career lined up when the five-second attention span of the new generation switches to something else, so I admire his intelligence. The crowd responded to him as if he was Elvis. He truly is the leader. The one every Alpha Male wants to play when they pretend to Morph in the schoolyard.

So they put their hands and feet in cement and then it's announced that the whole thing is actually being shipped over to the children's hospital in Oklahoma City that's taking care of the kids caught in the terrorist bombing. And we thought that the Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers were to be immortalized next to Gary Cooper, Judy Garland and other Hollywood icons at the Chinese.

Oh well. It was great publicity seeing that it was the largest crowd ever to gather for a cement signing at the theater. Why did hearing this fill me with a strange feeling of dread?

The next day I found out my friend was going to the wrap party for the *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers Movie,* and I begged and pleaded with her to let me crash it. I was, after all, a journalist, and this would be a prime opportunity to see the Rangers in their own element, away from the crowds of kiddies and cops.

She agreed to let me tag along and we went to the party, which was held at the carousel on the Santa Monica Pier. I got myself a margarita, rode the horsies and spoke with the crew, all who seemed bitter and cynical about their contributions to the mythology of children's television.

I kind of figured it would be that way, but that's not why I was there. I wanted to get intimate and personal with Kimberly the Pink Ranger, woo her into a state of sexual frenzy and escape into the night in a passionate midnight run back to my place!

Well, she shows up with not only her boyfriend, but her entire family, flown out from back East for the festivities. She did look lovely as she rode around on the carousel, her well-chiseled features letting me know that those young grade school boys certainly weren't stupid in their feelings toward the superhero goddess in pink. I was shy and nervous and actually quite excited to be there. It was the same feeling I had when David Hasselhoff and the KITT car from *Knight Rider* made an appearance at Universal Studios back when I was twelve. I knew I was in the presence of greatness.

So all night I tried to get close to her, and finally my opportunity arrived. She was leaving the bathroom to get a cigarette (Yes kids! The Pink Ranger smokes!) and I confronted her.

"You're my favorite Power Ranger." I said.

"Thanks." She replied in a squeaky voice.

And then she walked off into the night.

Fuck. I think I'm in love.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: This piece was written about two years ago and I haven't seen The Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers *in quite a while. They have been through a few more cast changes since that time as well as becoming "Turbo-Zeo Power Rangers". Amy Jo Johnson, the original Pink Ranger, has done a few TV movies since then, including the giant squid* Jaws *rip-off* The Beast *and has a band called Valhalla. (hope that's spelled right) that you might catch playing around Hollywood.*

BIOGRAPHIES OF ARTISTS & CONTRIBUTORS

ADRIAN TOMINE Creator of the best-selling *Optic Nerve* series from Drawn & Quarterly. His illustrations and short strips have appeared in *Details* and *Pulse*, as well as on many album covers. (pg. 131; interview pg. 83)

ARIEL SCHRAG details her high school years in comic form in *Awkward, Definition*, and *Potential* (Slave Labor Graphics). (rec rev???; interview pg. 21)

BRIAN DOHERTY is a writer and editor whose work has appeared in dozens of magazines and five books. He runs Cherry Smash Records from his living room on the west side of Los Angeles <BMDoherty@aol.com>

CHRIS LEE is a NYC-based writer whose work has appeared in various publications including *Index* magazine, *Paper*, and the on-line webzine *Blair* <www.blairmag.com>. He published the zine *Bossanova*, which is all about *Who's the Boss*. (e-mail to obtain copy) Right now his real life is a train wreck. <sour@worldnet.att.net>

CHRIS MORRILL puts out a fine zine entitled *No Fi*. See him web wide at <http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/palms/3210>

MISSING: **CLIFF THURBER** Sandy brown hair, brown eyes, approximately 5'10", 140lbs. Last seen in torn purple jeans, talking about Chilly Willy. Presumed to have skipped town with *BID* P.O. Box key. Possibly became Scientologist.

DANIEL RAEBURN is the editor of *The Imp*. He lives in Chicago and has no shower. <theimp@xsite.net?

DARBY's top ten: Phil Hendrie; Master P; Chokebore, Val Kilmer; *Cuckoo*; *Definition*; ginger (the spice not the girl); figure skating competition; *Titanic*, her apple E-mate! <benisdead@earthlink.net>

DAVID LASKY is the creator of *Boom Boom* (Aeon Press), and he currently works as an art director at Fantagraphics Books. (pg. 128)

EMILY WRIGHT is finishing up her Art and English degrees. As of late she is working on a series of paintings which study tacky little dogs and their owners' long legs and fancy shoes. When at school, Emily works hard painting naked old guys. (pg. 10)

EPCOTT FITZGERALD was brought into the world due to a freak accident, and is now known as the human night-light. (pg. 123)

ERIC REYNOLDS: Creator of *SLIME: The Secret Sex-Life of J. Edgar Hoover* (Eros) and editor of *Dirty Stories*, a collection of alternative pornography from Eros/Fantagraphics. <reynolds@fantagraphics.com> (pg.133)

ERICK GILBERT is European and a sex-comic guru at Last Gasp. He wears leather. <lastgasp@hooked.net>

ERICK MORGAN was voted "best artist" in his eighth grade yearbook. He does freelance artwork and enjoys catholic school girls. (pg. 7)

ESTEFANY FIDEL ¡Ay qué curvas, y todos ustedes sin frenos! Con esa cola, me formo dos veces. <fresa@aol.com>

EVAN MACK is one of the longest suffering staff members dedicated to helping supply the public with adequate amounts of *Ben*. Evan animates kiddie cartoons like *Extreme Ghostbusters*, is a Big Jesus record mogul, and a member of the re-grouped Chrome – let them rock you.

FIONA SMYTH's cartoons have appeared all of the place, including Starhead's *DIVA* and her own series, *Nocturnal Emissions*. (pg. 15)

GLORIA ALVEAR and **MIKE SMITH** actually are twins. They have been in an incestuous relationship for eons, because, well, you know, incest is best. They are in no way scarred by this sacred prohibition; though Gloria spends her time drawing pretty pictures, often to illustrate projects of others. (pg. 125)

Hot Rod Todd "Lurch" Jacobs (aka **THE BRAT**) "sings" for the Suicidal Lovers, as well as for the Shock. He lives in fear of bad hair days.

HOWARD HALLIS is also known as Wrong Dimension Boy, the Omni-Dimensional Superhero and King of Karaoke. The Bedbuster Loves smoking the funny and smushing the bunny. <WRNGDIMBOY@aol.com> (pg. 8)

JACK OFTEN is an international prosthetic arm smuggler and has a 33° slack belt in Chu Sum Shit. He spends his free time dodging angry bands and label reps. Approach with caution. (pg. 129)

JANE CACOPHONY <jtunks@lfp.com>

JASON COLE doesn't mean to be a pest. He spends a great deal of time e-mailing, yet still eagerly checks his snail-mail box for presents that never arrive. <SubvertMan@aol.com>

JHONEN VASQUEZ drew the fabulous cover for this issue. (interview pg. 95)

The great comic myth is that **JIM BLANCHARD** is the inspiration for Bagge's *Hate* character Buddy Bradley. All we can say is we've seen the penciled pages Bagge sends over for Jim to ink…and he's an inkin' genius! Besides *Hate*, and his own occasional comic Bad Meat, he is also the inker for darby (see pg 154), and contributed a brilliant record review in comic form which really displays his true nature (pg. 131)

JIM WOODRING is the modern genius behind *Frank and JIM* (Fantagraphics). Enough can not be said of this man's talent, which is unparalleled in contemporary comics. (pg. 118)

KAREN ENG Loud droning instruments make her happy. She divides her time between West Berkeley and North Berkeley. <kfeng@igc.apc.org>

KEVIN SCALZO is the creator of the mini-comics *Boobytit* and *Chop Suey*. His work has frequently appeared in Peter Bagge's *Hate*. (pg. 126)

LEYNA MARIKA P lives near the tallest free standing tower in Kansas. Besides contributing for past issues of Ben, she is now most famous

SUBSCRIBE

$15 for 3 issues • $20 first class
1st class Canadian $25 • Elsewhere $35
best friend subs $50 (get our undying devotion, gifts, priority mailing...)

ALL BACK ISSUES: $5 each
except (FOR THE 1st TIME IN 4 YEARS!)
THE SEX ISSUE: $20 • THE GROSS ISSUE $15
(very limited supply)

Also for the 1st time ever, the *almost* complete Ben Is Dead box set*. Now *almost* all of the issues together in a signed and numbered personal collection. Includes all the newsletters, posters, stickers, and of course, THE SEX ISSUE!

✤ $150 ✤

Plus if you're among the first to order, u will receive our *I Hate Brenda* book and the famed Rump CD.

* only 25 sets available. if we sell out by the time your check arrives it will be returned to you.

T-SHIRTS $15: The Dynamite Shirt. Ben Is Dead in full color glitter n black, orange or sassy lime. Youth L, adult's L or XL. The Hulk Shirt. Full color image from cover issue #27 on light blue shirts youth's L, adult L or XL. Death Shirt Full color image from cover issue #24. On black youth L, adult L, XL. I Am Not Part of the Solution ($10) New Rubik's cube shirt – very smart. White w/ blue ringer, youth L, adult L, XL.

the comics issue
more interviews, articles, & art with:
renee french • erick gilbert • billal-dani tull • band comics phil hendrie
toy dolls • demo hell • wow cool
plus
topical reviews • back issues • ordering info
www.benisdead.com

FOR MORE INFO ON BEN IS DEAD, AND OUR NEW ZINE SOCIALLY FUCKING RETARDED, PLEASE SEND 32¢ STAMP FOR A CATALOG TO PO BOX 3166, HOLLYWOOD, CA 90028 OR CHECK THE WEB.

BIOGRAPHIES OF ARTISTS & CONTRIBUTORS continued.

for her violin works in the Geraldine Fibbers. (pg 89)

LISA ANNE AUERBACH lives in Los Angeles with her computer and dead plants, watching porn and dreaming about blizzards. Sometimes she's snowbound. <anniebach@earthlink.net>

LORRAINE MAHRU has problems distinguishing what is tangible from what is fabricated. When she's not slaving away at *BID* headquarters, she sits at home playing with her dolls. She shoots pictures (*ℒ) for various reasons. (pg 130)

MEREDITH DUNCAN celebrates mental health day in San Clemente by taking off work on Fridays. Enjoys long walks on the beach, rollerblading, and guys with big noses. She puts out *Lollypinkus Smut for Girls.* <jmdCA@ix.netcom.com>

MICK BLADDER: Marxist jet-setter and Britannic Punk Rock Playboy is a member of that wonderful band, Bladder Bladder Bladder – a group of talented English yobbo musicians dedicated to enriching the lives of American youth and drinking the lot of you under the table. Throw your bleedin' snowboards on the fire and join the smart Bladder in-crowd!

NANCY NATHAN writes, takes pictures, and works at *The Advocate* to pay her rent. Her work has also appeared in *Word, Fluxion, Virus,* and *LA Weekley*. <nnathan@advocate.com>

NOËL TOLENTINO is the editor of *Bunnyhop*. Darby thinks he's little. What the fuck does that mean? <bunnyhop@slip.net>

PATTY POWERS always comes up with something more sexually deviant every time. We just don't know what to say in this case, except, maybe... Did he bark?

PAUL SHARAR plays guitar in the Fifth Story Tenants, is the creator of several Zoo Arsonist Press comics, and spends a lot of time in the dentist's chair. (pg. 34; 62)

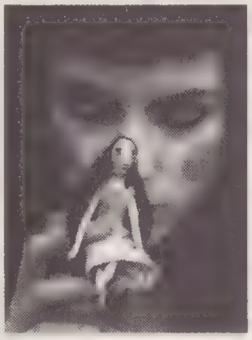
REV. RANDALL TIN-EAR is the editor of *Angry Thoreauan* and regularly contributes to *Flipside* and *Popsmear*. He can often be found dumpster-diving the Jewelry district in downtown Los Angeles.

RYAN BIGGE: Misplaced Canuk temporary intern who looks questionably comfortable in a clown suit. Has been known to wear Teva sandals and other such hideous apparel (for the love of god, throw that jacket *away*) but his transgressions have been forgiven. Can be found lurking under jungle-gyms and editing at *Adbusters* <rbigge@sfu.ca>

SELINA ROMAO was our four star Hollywood Street Scene correspondent (for two issues) but since she hasn't been homeless for almost three years she's moved on, living a new life with her cats Teadorra and Bailey and has almost figured out the concept of paying the phone bill on time. *I do think living on the street was beneficial for me Before now I lacked responsibility and could not do those everyday tasks like going to work and keeping a job for more then a few months etc. It is hard to explain how the streets did that for me, but I learned on the streets how to take care of myself without relying on others completely like I did before I admit I miss the spontinaity and the wackness; it was like living in an underground world were no one above knew or could ever understand what exactly was going on underneath them Sometimes I wish I was there again Living a "regular life" is quite dull in comparison but honestly I wouldn't change the clean, healthy, comfortable monotony of my apartment for the dirty, unhealthy, sometimes scary paronoia that living on the streets could be It's funny sometimes people will make comments to me about homeless people saying how they're all the scum of the earth, lazy, dirty etc and when i mention that I was once one of those scums they say "Oh, but your different." Well, everyone is different Thank you for the letters and for reading my articles See ya, SELINA* (pg 131)

SHIRLEY (Kurata) is a girlie who's squirrelly and likes Mr. Furley. <skurata@flash.net>

STEPHANIE MEURER rules her life by the guidance of the omnipotent magic 8 ball. <smeurer@aol.com>



Miss Ramona Rosales took this picture of Lorraine posing with one of Dame Darcy's precious handmade dolls If you want one too, send a $52 check to Dame Darcy Stanger, POB 730, NYC, NY 10009 Send your own hair if you like.

STEVE MORAMARCO is a writer, musician, and speed-typist. He live in Los Angeles with his two dogs, Supermercado and François. <

STYMIE BALDWIN pays the rent as a film critic for a So. Cal. alternative news weekly, but his heart belongs to comix. (pg 80;81)

RIKKI TAVICAT Made computer magic with Jhonen's cover artwork. A coloring genius, we're complete dedicated fans. <TAVICAT@aol.com>

TOM DOUGHERTY is an up-and-coming cartoonist whose first published work appeared in Fantagraphics' *Dirty Stories*. he is currently collaborating with Jim Woodring on a project called *Bronco Teddy* for Dark Horse

thank you's Golden Apple, Eric Reynolds and all at Fantagraphics, Jim Blanchard, Noah, Ron Turner, Colin Turner, Erick Gilbert @ Last Gasp, Slave Labor, James Masente!!!, Ape, SD Comic Con, Peter Heustis, Jeff @ *Testical Pressure,* Howie Dard, Robert Connett, Blair Wilson, Dan Clowes, Evan Mack, Pat Moriarty, Marcel DeJure, Paul Simms, Stephen Metz, Andy @ Epitaph, Sharron Ebling, Sandy Booker (web master), Interset (on 3rd for great output!), China Times (Peter, Tony, Johnny!!!), Mary Fleener, JR, Michelle Anderson, Carla B., Renee French, Comic Relief Berkeley, the old San Francisco Cartoon Art Museum staff, Bob Kurthy, and all the people who sent in contributions who's work was not included & everyone else we forgot in this moment under pressure. +RETRO HELL BOOK EVENT THANK YOUS: Bruce Elliot, Karrin Vanderwahl, Noel Tolentino, Seth Robson, Bridget Miller, Riley More, Lisa McElroy, Jessica Gruener, Bil Pauley, Amy Wallace, Brian Doherty, Jen & Brian Brannon, Gwynne Kahn, Mike Vague, Howard Hallis, Stymie Baldwin, Cliff Thurber, Troy Bruno Balthazar, Booksmith, Book Soup, Borders, Little Brown, Skylaire Alfvegren, Frank Lauria, Mike Snieder, & all who came. And we say farewell to Curtis York, and especially Anton LaVey, who was kind and full of encouragement.

Centerfold

this listing includes artists who participated in our centerfold (pg 74-75). the large poster board was brought around during the san diego comic convention in summer '97. sold to the highest bidder – give us a call u comic freakz.

Adrian Tomine *(Optic Nerve)* • Andi Watson *(Skeleton Key)* • Ariel Bordeaux *(Deep Girl; No Love Lost)* • Batton Lash *(Wolff & Byrd, Counselors of the Macabre)* • Bob Kurthy *(Pototo Mummy)* • Brian Biggs *(Dear Julia)* • C.S. Chun *(Tzu the Reaper)* • Craig Clark *(Nemesister)* • Dan Cooney *(Valentine)* • Dave Binke *(Surfin'stein)* • Dave Cooper *(Suckle; Zero Zero)* • David G. Brown *(L.A. Phoenix; Tales From the Kids)* • David Lasky *(Boom Boom)* • Dennis Worden *(Stickboy)* • Ed Brubaker *(Lowlife; Detour)* • Eric "Slime" Reynolds • Eric Berner *(Lost Stories)* • Evan Dorkin *(Milk & Cheese; Dork!; Hectic Planet)* • F. Andrew Taylor *(Beer and Roaming in Las Vegas)* • Garrett Berner *(Lost Stories)* • Gilbert 'Beto' Hernandez *(Love & Rockets; Whoa, Nellie!; New Love; Girl Crazy; Birdland)* • Gregory Benton *(Hummingbird!)* • Ivan Brunetti *(Schizo)* • J.R. Williams *(Crap; Bummer; Damnation; Bad Boys; Fun House)* • Jaime Hernandez *(Love & Rockets; Whoa Nellie!; Penny Century)* • Jason Thompson *(The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath)* • Jenni Gregory *(Dream Walker)* • Jessica Abel *(Art Babe)* • Jhonen Vasquez *(Johnny the Homicidal Maniac; Squee!)* • Jim Hill *(Caffeine)* • Joe Chiapetta *(Silly Daddy)* • Joy Lampitoc *(Silent Winter)* • Juan Jose Velez *(Soup)* • Kate Kane *(Dori Stories)* • Kevin Altieri *(Batman)* • Krystine Kryttre • Larry Welz *(Cherry)* • Laurie Ganaban *(Silent Winter)* • Lisa Maslowe *(Catbox Room)* • Lorraine Alexis Mahru *(Gypsy)* • Madison Clell *(Cuckoo)* • Mario Hernandez *(Love & Rockets; Brain Capers)* • Mary Fleener *(Life of the Party; Fleener; Splatterhead)* • Matt Lunsford *(Tenchi Muyo)* • Megan Kelso *(Girl Hero)* • Michael D. Kenny *(Young Bug)* • Neil Kendricks • Patricia Breen *(Sirius Dogstar; Kiss & Tell)* • Patrick Agullana *(Ninja Squirrel)* • Paul Sharar *(Clock; Manning Town)* • Peter Huestis • Rich Johnston *(X-Files; Flies in Black)* • Rikki Tavicat *(Reality Check)* • Riks W. *(Tykes)* • Sam Henderson *(Magic Whistle)* • Sam Lampoc *(Hawaii)* • Sarah Dyer *(Action Girl)* • Scott Alberts *(The Simpsons)* • Shaggy *(Polvo; Dingleberry)* • Tavi Tavicat *(Reality Check)* • Teri Sue Wood *(Darklight)* • Wayno *(At Large)*

classifieds • $10 = 40 words

BOO-BOO IS GOD, Love, the attainment of your most Secret desires. Boo-Boo is. Fall on your knees and Pray. You will be saved today. Send questions, commentary, cookies, donations to: The Oracle of Boo, 1917 Ridgecrest SE #314, Albuquerque, NM 87109.

EMO-CORE FANS! CAMBER's new *Beautiful Charade* cd is only $12 ppd US. Also "Hollowed-Out" 7-inch ppd US. Visa/MC orders call toll-free (888)802-2800. Visit the web at WWW.ROCKFETISH.COM/CAMBER. Send stamp for FREE catalog. Deep Elm Records, POB 1965, NY, New York 10156.

CHARLES GATEWOOD'S PHOTOGRAPHY BOOKS and videos rule! Fetish play, body modification, weird travel, more! For an outstanding illustrated catalog, send $1.00 (plus age statement) to Flash, Box 410052-B, San Francisco, CA 94141. Charles also loves receiving "unusual" mail and photos, especially from 22-year-old punkettes, so write today!

"THE DECADENT ROYALS play a blend of roots rock, bar blues, and gutter glamour music that demands a frantic, sugar high level of energy." *The New Groovy* CD available – $12 to Norman Kee, 39 McMaster St., Ballston Spa, NY 12020.

HAVE YOU EVER DREAMED OF BECOMING A SCENESTER? Don't look good in pleather pants? Then Lollypinkus is for you! Campy little 'zine needs contributions: art, music, sordid tales, whatever. Send SASE if you want it back. Elektra POB 104, San Clemente, CA 92674. elektra@vr-cafe.com

AS SEEN IN THE *SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS* and *Stern Magazine: The Silicon Valley Review.* (The best damn publication in the Bay Area.) Send $2 to: Gene Mahoney, Box 843, Redwood City, CA 94064. Call the plug-line at (415)995-1921.

ADULT VIDEOS AND TOYS with all the fetishes! Most videos $8! For your 60+ minutes XXX sample video and catalogue of $8 videos. Send $8 plus $2 S/H To: Xtreme, POB 20029-872, Encino, CA 91416.

HELLBENDER ZINE #11 out now with Descendents, Misfits, Subzero, Epitaph recs, Joshua, Drowning Room, Bobby Steele, more. $2.00 ppd. TIED DOWN-NYHC ala the CRO MAGS and VERBAL ASSAULT. SPLIT CD out now with BLOOD FOR BLOOD on Released POWER RECS. write for shirts, tapes, info. Coming soon on S.U.R. recs: DOWN LOW 7" POB 547 Vails Gate, NY 12584 horton47@aol.com

LOSERS ARE COOL 'ZINE is a rant-filled document that has gotten rave reviews from ZINE WORLD, 10 THINGS JESUS WANTS YOU TO KNOW, TRAILER TRASH & ANGRY THOREAUAN. You also get MR. CREEP comics, media sampling, The Grrl Wonder, and even more. Send a $1 cash or trade to: Robert W. "The Loser" Howington, 4405 Bellaire Drive South #220, Fort Worth TX 76109-5103

EMPOWER YOURSELF!!! Get your Girl Power Gear! T-shirts, beanies and stickers. Send for a FREE catalog to: GIRL POWER, POB 590446, San Francisco, CA 94159.

FREE MINI ALTERNATIVE CULTURE GUIDE (books, CDs, cult videos, zines, comix and assorted oddities). Complete version at http://www.essentialmedia.com/ or in print for $2. Write to Essential Media, Box 661245-B, LA, CA 90066-1245.

WE WILL FALL: THE IGGY POP TRIBUTE for LIFEbeat (AIDS charity). A 20 artist salute featuring Joey Ramone, Red Hot Chili Peps, Joan Jett, Blondie, Misfits, Monster Magnet, Nada Surf, Lunachicks, Superdrag, Pansy Division, 7 Year Bitch, Sugar Ray, Blanks 77, Extra Fancy, Jayne County & more. Royalty Records, 176 Madison Ave, 4th Fl, NY NY 10016. Royaltyrec@aol.com

ENTERTAINMENT JUNKIE? Get connected with a free subscription to ZENtertainment, a hip, twice-weekly e-mail of news and previews for Music, TV, Film, Print, Games, Toys, Attractions, and More... E-mail SeanJordan@aol.com and say SUBSCRIBE. http://www.zentertainment.com

FRIENDS OF LULU, an organization set up to increase awareness of comics among females, recently began a major overhaul of their Los Angles web site, and are currently seeking comic book professionals to contribute with info on such topics as how to break into the industry. http://members.aol.com/lulula

ROCKPLEX ON THE WEB: http://www.geocities.com/rockplex – MP3s, CDs of cool original music. Check it out!

V C
9 8

Vancouver
Convention 98

Sunshine,
lollipops and
photocopiers
everywhere

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada — a land boasting of clean air, clean water and very few guns is pleased to host a zine get together on Saturday, August 1st from noon until 8pm. Contact Ryan through:
<www.geocities.com/Paris/1537>
Phone 604-608-0191
Snail Mail: 11623 90th Ave, Delta, BC V4C-3H5

celebrity

Okay kids, next issue is Celebrity. Submissions of *all sorts* (including but *not limited to* celebrity encounters) are being sought. Text should be sent on disc in M.S. Word (with paper copy accompanying it), and visuals of any kind would be lovely. Our only request is that in your quest you engage in Victimless Stalking; otherwise, anything goes! Send to:

BEN IS DEAD, PO BOX 3166,
HOLLYWOOD, CA 90028.

The Fine Print: Include self-addressed stamped envelope if you d like your work returned. Warning, we are not responsible for work sent. All submissions become our property. Printed submissions will be properly rewarded. Call 213/960-7679 to keep up on deadlines, or go to www.benisdead.com.
p.s. local typists, proofreaders, energetic interns of the dedicated sort are in demand; reliability and low maintenance is key.

errors

>Photos of Ms. Davis' tour were graciously clicked by Crepe Suzette, except page 93 by Eckhard Bühler.

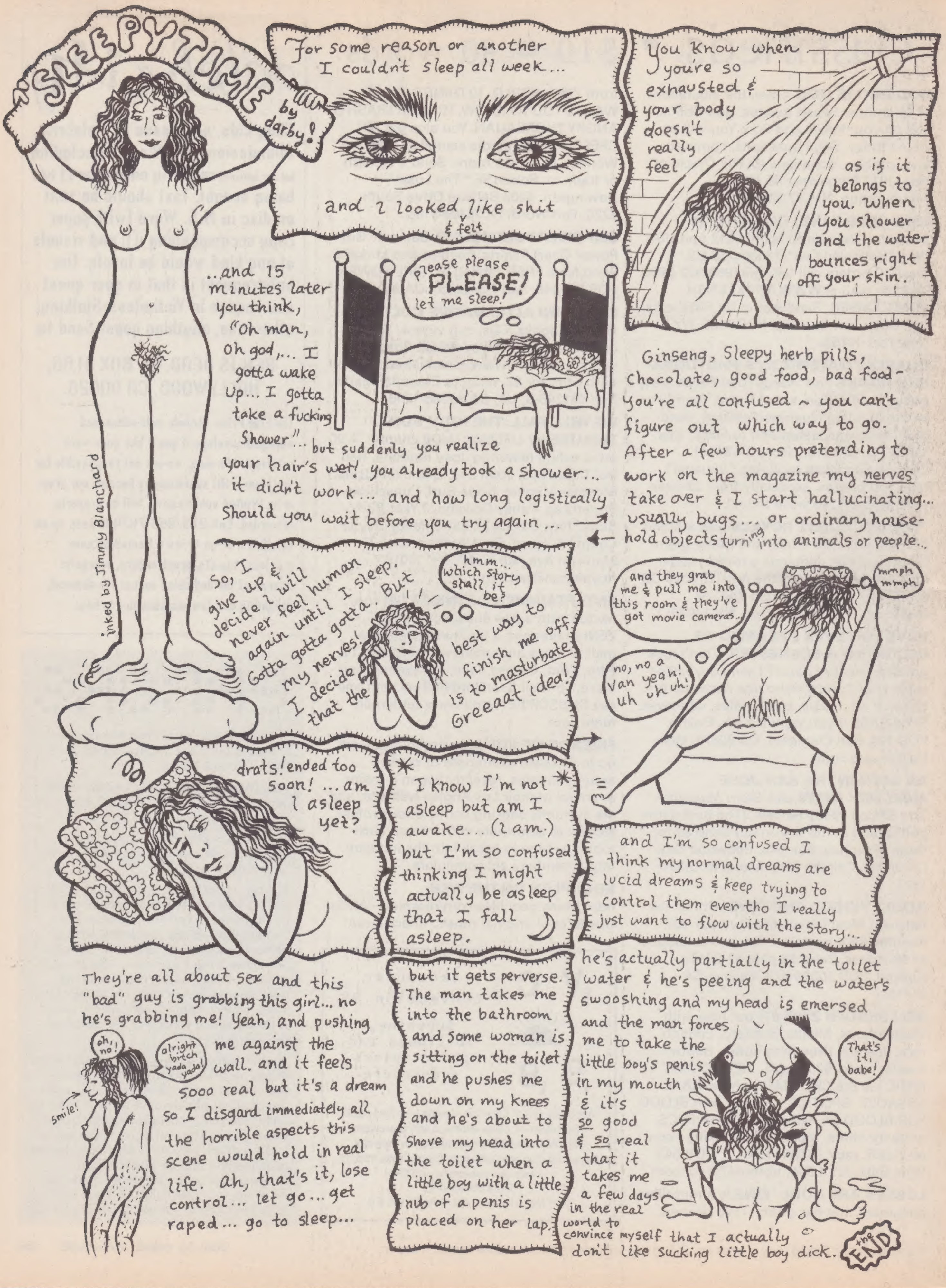
>The Velouria review was written on the napkin by Nina, Darby, Howard, and Jeff – Lisa AA never even heard of 'em.

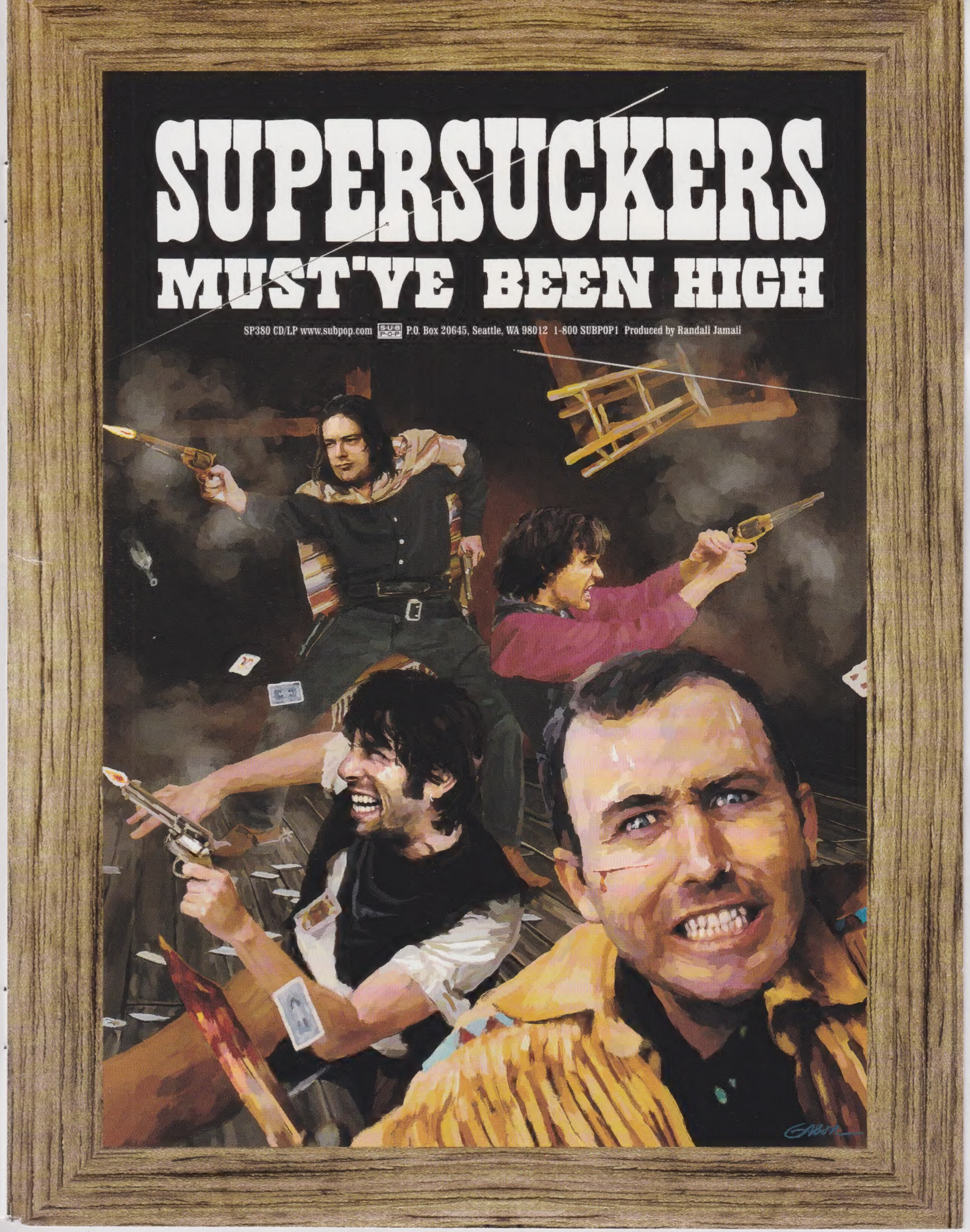
>*Casual Observer* is done by Lisa and Daniel, not Ben, who works with her on *Snowflake.*

>Darby wants to thank all the well-read girl readers who wrote in to point out a glaring error in her Masturbation Piece. Though that was the last article written before rushing to the printer, there is just no excuse for her forgetting about Judy's symbolic masturbation mention in the book *Deenie,* whose main character of the same name would rub her "special place". A better, edited version of it appears on the web. Click it.

>In the Jabberjaw review Darby said some things negative about Nyler. It was supposed to be a joke. She used to say mean things about him because he used to be a bully, and Darby is kinda a wimp. Darby wants ya'll to know that the entire Ben Is Dead staff are very sorry about the demise of Jabberjaw, and we all like Nyler. Congratulations to him on his upcoming marriage; coincidentally his fiancé works at Golden Apple. ...*Always in theme, see ya!*

Confuoocious say: If found many of typos you will lead long and dramatic life and become Olympic champion.


SLEEPYTIME
by darby!
inked by Jimmy Blanchard
For some reason or another I couldn't sleep all week...
and I looked like shit
& felt
You know when you're so exhausted & your body doesn't really feel as if it belongs to you. When you shower and the water bounces right off your skin.
...and 15 minutes later you think, "Oh man, Oh god,... I gotta wake Up... I gotta take a fucking Shower"... but suddenly you realize your hair's wet! You already took a shower... it didn't work... and how long logistically Should you wait before you try again...
please please PLEASE! let me sleep!
Ginseng, Sleepy herb pills, Chocolate, good food, bad food - You're all confused ~ you can't figure out which way to go. After a few hours pretending to work on the magazine my nerves take over & I start hallucinating... usually bugs... or ordinary household objects turning into animals or people...
So, I give up & decide I will never feel human again until I sleep. Gotta gotta gotta But my nerves! I decide that the best way to finish me off is to masturbate Greeaat idea!
hmm... which story shall it be?
and they grab me & pull me into this room & they've got movie cameras...
mmph mmph
no, no a Van yeah! uh uh uh!
drats! ended too soon! ... am I asleep yet?
I know I'm not asleep but am I awake... (I am.) but I'm so confused thinking I might actually be asleep that I fall asleep.
and I'm so confused I think my normal dreams are lucid dreams & keep trying to control them even tho I really just want to flow with the Story...
They're all about sex and this "bad" guy is grabbing this girl... no he's grabbing me! Yeah, and pushing me against the wall. and it feels Sooo real but it's a dream so I disgard immediately all the horrible aspects this scene would hold in real life. ah, that's it, lose control... let go... get raped... go to sleep...
oh, no!
alright bitch yada yada!
smile!
but it gets perverse. The man takes me into the bathroom and some woman is sitting on the toilet and he pushes me down on my knees and he's about to Shove my head into the toilet when a little boy with a little nub of a penis is placed on her lap.
he's actually partially in the toilet water & he's peeing and the water's swooshing and my head is emersed and the man forces me to take the little boy's penis in my mouth & it's so good & so real that it takes me a few days in the real world to convince myself that I actually don't like sucking little boy dick.
That's it, babe!
the END



SUPERSUCKERS

MUST'VE BEEN HIGH

SP380 CD/LP www.subpop.com SUB POP P.O. Box 20645, Seattle, WA 98012 1-800 SUBPOP1 Produced by Randall Jamail

THE GERALDINE FIBBERS

BUTCH

The new album out now

Write to us for a free 7" single featuring two tracks from Butch, while supplies last.
Virgin Records 338 N. Foothill Road Beverly Hills, CA 90210

©1997 Virgin Records America, Inc.